LIVING WITH LANGUAGE

A SHORT COURSE IN GENERAL SEMANTICS

Illustrated $5.50

100K

LIVING WITH LANGUAGE

A Short Course in General Semantics

by

P. M. O'Brien

Clinicians and scholars through the ages have told us over and over again that the main reason people have difficulty getting along with other people—whether individuals, tribes, social or ethnic groups, religions, or nationalities—is because of faulty communication. But how do we communicate with others? Primarily through language—verbal, written, and body language. And it is here, in this basic component of man—his language—that we reach the crux of the problem, for this same language which we were taught as children, and which we take for granted, has within it certain limitations of thought-processes which we have, almost totally unknowingly, accepted, and thus limited and circumscribed our ability to communicate/relate to/with others.

P. M. O'Brien, a high school teacher of general semantics for many years, examines the limitations placed upon our thought-processes—and consequently, on our actions and reactions—in *Living With Language*. Designed as a high school textbook in semantics, *Living With Language* discusses such communicative procedures and stumbling-blocks as abstractions; categorization; the "Allness" statement; two-value judgments; extensional and intentional statements; inference; identity; argumentation; and word-symbols. Topics are discussed in relation to the interests of high school students, and the problems and decisions facing early teenagers. Numerous classroom exercises and extended projects are recommended, many of them in game

(Continued on back flap)

LIVING WITH LANGUAGE

G.S.
C. MANTIX
GENERAL ~~SEMANTICS~~
WHAT? ME WORRY!!?

135348

REMOVED FROM THE
ALVERNO COLLEGE LIBRARY

LIVING WITH LANGUAGE

A SHORT COURSE IN GENERAL SEMANTICS

by

P. M. O'BRIEN

Illustrated by
the Author and Joe Harris,
Jenny Higley, Kevin Knutson

422
O13

VANTAGE PRESS
New York Washington Atlanta Hollywood

Alverno College
Library Media Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

FIRST EDITION

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or part in any form with the exception of the exercises which may, as the author suggests, be duplicated for classroom use only.

Copyright © 1976 by P. M. O'Brien

Published by Vantage Press, Inc.
516 West 34th St., New York, New York 10001

Manufactured in the United States of America

Standard Book Number 533-02063-8

To my wife, Patricia

CONTENTS

Instructor's Guide—Acknowledgments

Chapter

1. Group Activities 1
2. Decision-Making 6
3. Words 'n Things 11
4. Language and Your Self-Image 22
5. Abstractions and Abstracting 32
6. Reinforce, Review, and Discuss 44
7. Use and Misuse of Categories 47
8. The Allness Statement 49
9. Two-Value Judgments 50
10. Extensional and Intentional Statements 57
11. Inference and Fact 60
12. The Is of Identity 63
13. Delayed Response 65
14. Argumentation—Agree-Disagree—Competition 69
15. Games Students Play 79
16. Master Symbols—The Cultural Lag—Advertising 81
17. Songs 'n Words 88
18. Problem-Solving 96
19. General Semantics and the Mass Media 99
20. Problems of Communicating in English 104
21. Abstractions and Adult Infantilism 108
22. Suggestions for Group Projects 113

Appendixes 117

Bibliography 128

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE—
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This short course is the end (?) product of 28 years of classroom experience, experimentation, and sifting of materials, participation in general semantics and language arts institutes, and workshops in speech and communications-related areas.

Living with Language may be used for mini (6 weeks) or maxi (18 weeks) courses in areas of English, speech, psychology, mass media, social studies, or any part of the high school curriculum concerned with human communication and interaction. Virtually no general semantics background is required, *but it helps.* It consists of a variety of short units using a broad spectrum of approaches: case histories; life scripts; inductive questioning; and, most important of all, follow-up exercises—individual and group projects designed for a maximum of student involvement in motivating interest in investigating the various communications principles set forth. The range of "things to do" is structured to allow for individualized student interests and capabilities.

Explanatory passages are, in most cases, *brief,* allowing for further explorations in supplemental reading from a list of sources provided in the bibliography.

The emphasis is on group activities (small and large), encouraging groups to prepare written accounts of what they produce or agree upon. Continual "feed back" is urged by groups of the instructor so as to encourage an atmosphere of "information sharing" and to provide exposure of student products, as well as to offer positive reinforcement for achievement.

If a classroom set of texts is used, along with several additional copies for "outside-of-class" use, the instructor may wish to duplicate exercises that may be done on dittoed copies or student supplied paper, allowing for use of *Living with Language* in subsequent classes.

Supplemental films and semantics kits are available and are listed in the appendix.

I have found it worthwhile to require periodic outside reading reports from a wide range of print materials on language, semantics, mass media, and communications, as well as a major project to be done individually or in small groups as a course objective.

There should be a minimum of written work to evaluate—freeing the instructor to follow up class activities with further exercises and involvements that may arise from time to time. Much latitude is provided for the instructor or student to expand units when desired. Many teachers chose to introduce courses in mass media with a general semantics unit that may be expanded or contracted at their discretion.

Acknowledgments and the deepest appreciation I can express must go to the non profit Institute of General Semantics (headquartered at Lakeville, Connecticut 06039), permission from the Alfred Korsybski Estate for the use of materials from *Science and Sanity*, and the International Society of General Semantics (P.O. Box 2469, San Francisco, California 94126) and its membership for much of the initial interest in this area and the use of materials generously provided to promote better communications throughout the world. Likewise, thanks are extended to the National Council of English Teachers for providing me with a large audience to address myself to some years ago and the subsequent world wide response to this work in general semantics. Many more words would be needed to enumerate and thank all the kindly professionals, students, organizations, etc., who have helped and encouraged me in this most strenuous, demanding, but vastly rewarding effort.

P. M. O'Brien
North High School
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

June, 1975

1

GROUP ACTIVITIES

"Everybody's talkin' at me!"

When one stops to consider the enormous volume of spoken and written words that stream forth from all the world's human beings any given day, hour, or minute, *it boggles the mind!* Perhaps it is better that most of them disappear forever—words, that is. Lower species of living creatures at least have the advantage of keeping things to themselves, although we feel somehow or other we would not like to trade places with them. They cannot, as Mark Twain once said, "talk themselves into trouble" as man frequently does.

Like it or not, that is our lot as communicators of our thoughts, desires and emotions. We are, as Alfred Korzybski has pointed out, a "symbolic class of life," possessing the unique ability to abstract reality and form symbols in attempting to express it—as animals cannot.

Perhaps we can do something about this "mixed blessing" and try to solve more effectively the very special dilemmas we continually find ourselves in when we try to communicate with ourselves and others.

For openers read the following and think about. . . .

Ways of Getting our Ideas Across

Generally Non verbal (non print, either spoken or written)

1

GROUP ACTIVITIES

"Everybody's talkin' at me!"

When one stops to consider the enormous volume of spoken and written words that stream forth from all the world's human beings any given day, hour, or minute, *it boggles the mind!* Perhaps it is better that most of them disappear forever—words, that is. Lower species of living creatures at least have the advantage of keeping things to themselves, although we feel somehow or other we would not like to trade places with them. They cannot, as Mark Twain once said, "talk themselves into trouble" as man frequently does.

Like it or not, that is our lot as communicators of our thoughts, desires and emotions. We are, as Alfred Korzybski has pointed out, a "symbolic class of life," possessing the unique ability to abstract reality and form symbols in attempting to express it—as animals cannot.

Perhaps we can do something about this "mixed blessing" and try to solve more effectively the very special dilemmas we continually find ourselves in when we try to communicate with ourselves and others.

For openers read the following and think about. . . .

Ways of Getting our Ideas Across

Generally Non verbal (non print, either spoken or written)

Most Efficient

Least Efficient

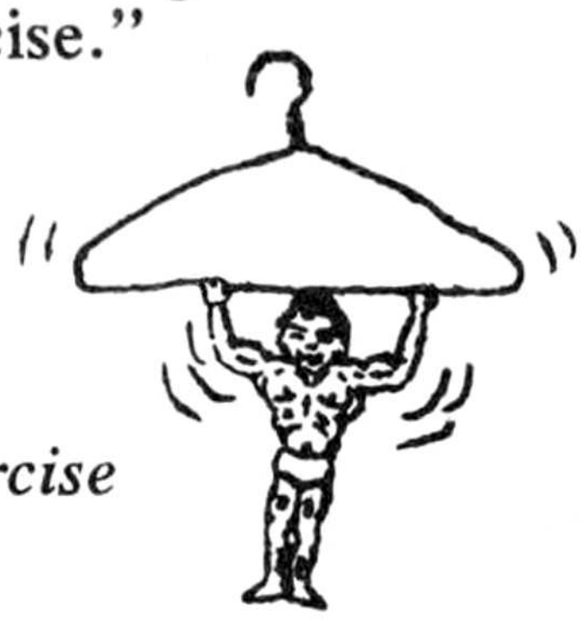
1. *Do together*—work together, guide, participative experiments, etc.
2. *Show*—demonstrations, handle models, act out skits, pantomime, etc.
3. *Draw diagrams*—emphasize key points, use graphs, pictures, etc.
4. *Gestures*—body, facial, hands, sound effects, etc.
5. *Pictures*—motion pictures, slides, photos, paintings, posters, scrap books, etc.
6. *Recall*—recall experiments in common, news items, examples, illustrations, etc.
7. *Case history*—study a concrete situation in a history or personal experience
8. *Actional talk*—punchy, direct, "gut level" functional language that keeps people awake
9. *Generalize*—abstract words, similarities, categorized ideas, allegories and parables
10. *Write*—one-way communication, limited feed-back, if any. Reading another's words, etc.

No one method above is "best"—any one method is helped by a variety of the other methods, for maximum effectiveness.

We get the most understanding when we work together in some creative activity in which we can sense and talk to others about our feelings and ideas.

Needless to say, most everyone involved in communications or occupations (teachers, clergymen, politicians, etc.) would do well to keep the above chart before them at all times. Or, as I have tried to do in the classroom, appoint someone to direct me to "shut up" when what I have to say begins to extend beyond the "point of *no return,*" which is usually something less than four minutes!

Since working together is the most effective way of sharing information and being understood, let us begin with a creativity group activity, the "Clothes Hanger Exercise."



Clothes Hanger Exercise

Divide into circle groups of four or five—depending upon the size of the class—by calling off numbers *one* to *five* (all *one's* in a group, all *two's* in another, etc.), or separating into groups by rows of desk chairs. Have each group select or have someone volunteer to serve as a "recorder-observer," who will list in writing all the things that can be done with a clothes hanger besides hanging clothes on it. This "recorder-observer" may also contribute to the group task and be asked to make statements about how the group performed and why, after the group's results are submitted or "fed back" to the class.

A real clothes hanger should be observed and handled by the participants. Set a time limit (about 20 minutes) and see how many uses your group can come up with—number them—either serious or trivial. Be sure each group has a name or number for identification in helping to compute results, and make winner-loser awards and summarize findings.

When the time limit is up, list on the board the group and the number of different uses they arrived at. Determine the following:

1. Which group had the most? the least? why?
2. Was there something about the make-up of the group that led to more or fewer uses than the others? Sex of members? etc.?
3. Did someone discourage or discount some suggestions as impractical or "too far out"? Other negative influences?
4. Did you enjoy the exercise? Find it "pointless"? Did anyone hang back for one reason or another . . . fail to contribute? Why?

Follow-up Example of Group Creativity

Reproduced is an advertisement for Ballantine's Scotch done by professional ad copy specialists which appeared recently in nationally circulated publications:

21 THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH A GIANT REPLICA OF A BALLANTINE'S SCOTCH BOTTLE*

1. Use it as a large lure for a discriminating fish.

2. Stick it in a baby carriage to show people how much you love it.

3. Carry it in front of you to hide a double chin.

4. Place it on top of your T.V. set to watch when dull programs come on.

5. Hide behind it when your mother-in-law comes.

6. Put a lampshade on it and watch people try to turn it on.

7. Give it to your wife as a part of a divorce settlement.

8. Makes an ideal wig stand.

9. Give it to someone for Christmas.

10. Send it to someone you like very much.

11. Send it to someone you dislike very much.

12. Take it to bed with you if you can't find your Teddy Bear.

13. Donate it to a museum that has a vacant pedestal.

14. Stick it in a piano to achieve muted resonance.

15. Be the first on your block to have one.

16. Put sunglasses on it and take it to the beach.

17. Stick it in the closet and forget the whole thing.

18. Use it to cover a worn spot in the carpet.

19. Talk to it (but don't expect an answer).

20. Claim as a dependent on April 15.

21. Use it for a hitching post for a small horse or very large ant.

*© "21 Brands," Box 5265, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y.

Some More About Groups

Now that you're a bit more familiar with your classmates and have participated in a "brain-storming-think-tank" session (though a slightly silly one), it is interesting to know that experiments have shown there is about 67% *more* idea-forming (creativity) done in groups than individually!

You may wish now (or later) to set up another group activity to see how accurate that figure is. Have groups do a similar kind of ideation exercise singly—then in groups. Keep tally sheets separate in each case. Have a good math student compute the results. Possible topics:

> If you were to design a new school, what features would you include in it that would be more useful and satisfying to you? (Keep descriptive items brief.)
>
> List the number of ways you could think of to get people to stop littering.
>
> List as many "fun-to-do" things as you can think of and all the "hate-to-do's" on another list.

When you add the total of items thought up among the individuals in a group and compare it with the group contributions, you should get more than twice as many from the latter. Set a time limit and stick to it as carefully as possible. Also, write down everything and keep track of patterns, findings, trends, inconsistencies, etc., on the blackboard.

2

DECISION-MAKING

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions! What to do? Where to go? When to make up my mind???

A Case in Point:

Mrs. Fridley's three teenagers had reached a point in their lives when they wanted to go out at night more frequently to school or other social activities that often led to late hours. It also involved cars, places, and friends, some of which Ma Fridley felt might lead to "trouble." She wanted to be fair and consistent in setting up a "zero hour" while wishing also to remain on friendly terms with her kids and avoid the usual "hassles" that often occur in such situations.

Remembering her own adolescence, she had later wished there had been more parental restraints on her behavior, especially when it came to late hours. Should she ask them when they'd be home? Tell them when to get in? Or say nothing? Unable to make up her mind, she passed the problem on to her husband, an "easy out" which she resorted to more often in recent years. This behavior pattern reinforced her inability to make decisions—a trait beginning to become obvious in her daughter Mary's decision-making habits.

Several years before, Mr. Fridley, an accountant with a small local business firm, had a high-paying job opportunity in a larger city several hundred miles away. He wanted to provide the best for his family with an income sufficient to allow his wife to quit her part-time job as a retail clerk in a department store.

Leaving his home town for a more highly congested city and uprooting the youngsters from their friends and school seemed too high a price to pay for the affluence the new position might provide. On the other hand, he was not getting any younger, and the possibility of

having to put his sons and daughter through college might be a financial burden too heavy to bear on his existing salary. . . .

Bob Fridley was well-endowed physically, always enjoyed sports, especially football, and was a likely candidate to play on the varsity team his junior year, possibly as a "two-way" player. He wanted to take as heavy a class schedule the next year as possible in order to graduate in mid-term his senior year. His grades in most subjects were above average and he had planned to apply for a scholarship for entrance to pre-med school. His dad had always made a point of complaining about several rather severe football injuries and vowed if he had a chance to relive his youth, he would pass up football. Bob's mother never disguised her hatred for violent contact sports. Likewise, Bob's closest friends were forever making sneering remarks about those stupid "jocks" always wanting to run everything and get all the attention. . . .

Sound familiar? It should. Though these decisions are big, we face them and lesser ones every day of our lives. How do you make decisions? Have you ever observed how your parents and friends make them? Whether the question is "what clothes should I wear?" "how should I use my leisure time?" or "what do I want to spend the rest of my life doing?" we are confronted continually by problems that need solving and decisions that sooner or later must be made.

One of the few things most everyone agrees on is that we *cannot change what has already happened*! THE PAST IS IRREVERSIBLE! However, it is quite clear that we can order future events more carefully. Human behavior is *purposive!* We *can* structure the future more satisfyingly.

Most people also feel that the more we rely on others to make decisions for us, the less capable we become in resolving our own living problems. Similarly, an inability to make decisions generally results in a failure to fulfill our own needs. According to Dr. William Glasser, when this happens we fall into patterns of irresponsible behavior, and we all know how "rotten" that can be!

Let's see if it is possible to structure a decision-making procedure—to become our own Ann Landers, even—that is, minus the snide "put-downs" and wisecracks. Perhaps we may be able to live lives less like a T.V. soap opera and more like reasonable citizens of the 20th century. As you will see in the following class activity, it is far easier to give someone else advice—since it seldom affects the giver. The advisee is in the other person's skin.

Class Exercise:

Each one in class should compose at least five troublesome decisions you either have or will face in the future. Space them far enough apart so they may be detached later.

Form groups as before, either by being assigned by the teacher or (better yet) list the group tasks on the board and have each one in class volunteer for the group activity he thinks he would most enjoy.

Group 1. Sort out decisions submitted by the class (eliminating the repetitious ones) and tabulate the ones most often mentioned. Label those that are serious and those more trivial in nature. Arrive at a concensus (group agreement) for the bigger problems and prepare group findings for feed back to the class.

Group 2. Prepare a presentation of several very important decisions made by famous people from the pages of history that affected many people's lives, both at the time they were made and for future generations. Try to determine what factors may have entered into the decision-making process. Name names and limit your case histories to rather short prose paragraphs. (An interesting example is President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.)

Group 3. Arrange a list of decisions that are made *for you* by others at home, in school, or in the community which you would like to have a hand in but seldom do. Try to point out why they were made without any "input" from those the decisions affect. Then consider and compose ways by which you could force or encourage others to allow you to participate in the decisions. Feed back to the class.

Group 4. Discuss the various ways in which decisions are made by members of your group. Concentrating on several comparatively significant ones, such as whether to buy or own a car, go on to college, etc., prepare a step-by-step procedure of how one might arrive at a decision with more assurance that it will be a wise one. When you present it back to the class, be sure you get reactions from others to see if you omitted some vital part of the procedural structure. What part, for instance, should feelings or intuition play, etc?

Group 5. Concentrate on decisions faced by young people that are of *immediate concern* and that affect physical, moral, or ethical

behavior, and the consequences that may carry over into later life—such crucial problems as whether to start smoking cigarettes, alcohol or drug use, sexual experimentation, attend church, etc. Avoid the "cop out" of "it depends upon. . . ." Set up a list of serious considerations that may help others in the class make more prudent choices of alternatives involving these more critical living problems.

NOTE: Group dynamics are usually more successful if people have choices of what they would like to work on. Some groups may wish for more time to interview others, research in the media center, or just run the problem around in their heads a bit. Be sure an extended time limit is justified—not just a procrastinative device. Very often members of the class may suggest more thought-provoking group topics than a textbook author or teacher does. Whatever stimulates more involvement and interest should at all times be encouraged. If any part of this course leads to another area of investigation, by all means pursue it . . . Time and Life are pleasantly expansible, especially so in a course such as General Semantics.

Working together, doing together

As enjoyable as group activities are, to go on to the next part of this course without summing up new awarenesses, ideas, or methods of solving problems, might add up to little more than noisy "busy work." Let's take a few minutes to try to answer or discuss the following questions (it is helpful to jot things down on the board as they arise in class discussion):

1. Do you think this introductory unit on decisions will help you handle them more effectively in the future?

2. What are some of the difficulties you faced in working together or getting to understand fully enough the task of arriving at sensible decision-making or group task objectives?

3. What kinds of sloppy thinking or living habits keep us from ordering future events more satisfactorily?

4. What part does language (words) play in our ability to reason or express ourselves with more precision? In other words (and more words), how do words themselves often get

in the way of effective communication with ourselves an others? Do you suppose if several more sentences wer composed to try to make this question clearer, it woul succeed? Why or why not?

3

WORDS 'N THINGS

(As sung to "The Farmer in the Dell")*

The word is not the thing,
The word is not the thing—
Words can never take the place
Of what is happening.

That robin's song you heard
You ran and spread the word—
But was it quite as real as tho'
You all had heard the bird?

You read about a brook,
You'd love to have a look,
But could you ever dip your toe
Into a story book?

You saw the setting sun—
Could you tell anyone?
Words are just a lot of noise
When all is said and done

And wouldn't it be absurd
If nothing but the word
Could bring you all the wonder
Of a sunset, brook, or bird?

* The author gratefully acknowledges the source below for the use of this and other appropriate verses included in subsequent chapters:

Globus, Leo
Living and Learning, Series A. (Phonadisc) By Leo and Helen Globus, Wee Wisdom Records MB-1218—MB-1219. © 1955. Made in Canada.

This part of the course will cover the "word" element of language in two ways: *specifically* what meaning words have (if any) and *generally* how words and language affect human behavior.

The word *semantics*, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, has come into the English language fairly recently—about 1895. It was then used to refer to what would be the Greek equivalent of the English word "significant" or "signifying"—having to do with a "kernal" of meaning—"sem," *sem*blance, re*sem*ble, sign, etc.

Perhaps we may try to use this method—defining—as a means of introducing this unit. What we seem to arrive at is the difficulty involved in determining any meaningful or useful definition of any word, term, label, or symbol when we attempt to do it in the conventional way—that is, by consulting "the dictionary." Language scholars who specialize in tracing the various changes in what a word refers to (referents) usually agree that "looking up" definitions of words in a dictionary or book of synonyms is a tedious and mostly unsuccessful method of finding out what words "really mean."

Definitions—Words and Reality

From your own experiences with vocabulary study in English or language classes, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do different dictionaries seem to treat word meanings differently? If so, why and how?

2. Why is a word definition "outside a sentence" (out of context) misleading as to its usage? Can you think of examples?

3. When Alice in Wonderland, from Lewis Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass,* objected to Humpty Dumpty's using the word "glory" to mean a "nice, knock-down argument," and he replied that "when I use a word, it means what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less," what profound truth about language and word meanings did he state?

4. In direct, "person-to-person" conversation, what actually determines the meaning of a word used by a speaker?

5. Is it inconclusive and ineffective to define a word with more words (synonyms)?

6. Can a word ever actually be the thing (or object) it is intended to represent? Can you think of any?

7. Both Alfred Korzybski and S. I. Hayakawa point out that words represent an object about the same way a map represents a territory. What do maps lack that their actual geographical territories have?

8. Can you think of any human predicaments that are often caused by people reacting to words as if they were the things themselves (i.e., *fire, sex*)?

9. What are some emotionally charged words that usually conjure up distorted or prejudiced mental images or irrational human behavior? These are referred to as *semantic reactions* and, henceforth, as *s.r.*

10. What is the wisest (or most efficient) way of gathering meanings when listening to others?

What Is a Pencil?

With the teacher holding the pencil up in front of the class, volunteer as many descriptive words or terms as you can as to size, shape, etc. Try to include as many characteristics of this pencil as you can with the goal of a *complete analysis* in mind. After several minutes and as many descriptive items as the class can muster, ask the questions:

1. Do you think you have completely described this pencil?

2. What other things need being said about or done to the pencil to get *it all in*?

3. Can you ever get *all* of a verbal (worded) description of an object in—that is, enough to satisfy scientists?

4. Does the description you completed describe exactly another pencil your teacher might show you?

5. What has happened to the original pencil since you began describing it? Is it the very same pencil it was then? yesterday? a month ago?

6. Can any two objects ever be *exactly* the *same*?

You can't say all about anything,
anything,
anything—
You can't say all about anything
No matter how you try.

An apple, a pencil, a thingamajig,
no matter how small,
no matter how big—
You can never know all about anything
And here are some reasons why:

We hear, we touch, we taste, and see,
but do so
rather imperfectly—
Some things are changing so rapidly
On our senses we cannot rely.

Now the teacher will write the word *pencil* on the board and ask the following questions:

1. Is the word *PENCIL* the same thing as the object you tried to describe?

2. If the answer to this question is "NO, of course not," you may wonder what the purpose of this exercise is? What might it be?

3. What is the definition of a "pencil" given in a dictionary in your room? How does it compare to the things you said about the pencil at the beginning of this activity?

People are rarely "shaken up" by common name words like *pencil* or *house*, but often are when they hear expressions intended to startle or arouse more violent behavior in the hearer.

1. If you heard someone say, "May Buddha put ground glass in your oatmeal!" what might your reaction be? Now, supposing someone said, "God damn you to Hell!" what might happen? How can you explain the different semantic reactions (s.r.) to these statements?

2. How can one explain the effect that profanities, curses, or obscenities have on people in our society? Have these attitudes changed in recent years? Why?

THE WORD IS NOT THE THING; THE MAP IS NOT THE PLACE; THE NAME IS NOT THE PERSON; THE FLAG IS NOT THE COUNTRY; THE PHRASE IS NOT THE EVENT!

WORDS *DO NOT* HAVE MEANING; ONLY PEOPLE DO WHO USE THEM!

Follow-Up Projects

1. Prepare a brief list of the discrepancies that appear in different dictionaries in the way they define the same words. Look up several words that are defined with words that when looked up refer back to the original word, i.e. *impudence—impertinence* (this is known as "circularity"—round 'n round we go!). Read back to the class or prepare a visual (poster) for the bulletin board with results.

2. List as many "labels," "slogans," or vague "generalities" as you can that tend to distort reality or produce anti-social s.r.

3. From several students in your class or others, try to determine what they mean by such terms as "old age," "poverty," an "attractive" boy or girl, "intelligence," a "gentleman," or a "lady." Feed results back to class either in the form of a casette tape interview or written prose account.

4. If you have access to a transparency maker and an overhead projector, prepare a printed list of emotionally charged words along with some that are more pallid (dead) or that "turn off" readers. Put them on the screen for about 10 seconds—then have class write down words they recollected from the list—compare lists, discuss why some words "stuck" and others did not.

5. Prepare a brief analysis of just how people should, in conversations, derive a maximum of *information sharing* while listening to or talking to each other. Duplicate it and hand out to class and discuss, adding any other helpful points to the report.

6. Prepare a short study of just how language interferes with or enhances one's ability to evaluate ourselves or others effectively.

7. Prepare as many questions as you can about words, word origins, the "so-called" meaning of words or historical changes in word usage, arguments over words, the learning of language, its use, etc., as you can. Put on transparencies or duplicate for oral class discussion, either seeking out answers or provoking more questions.

8. From your experiences or learning, list or discuss a number of symbols, religious rituals, legal expressions, political slogans, oaths, vows, initiation ceremony devices, etc., that are intended to provoke reverence, awe, obedience, etc., as you can. Either list them for feedback to class or put them on a visual for display on bulletin board. Professional sports or advertising symbols may also lend themselves to this type of project.

9. Prepare a short skit or "role-playing" presentation, either live or on video tape (if available), of some solemn ceremony that points up the symbolic nature of the traditional use of these devices.

10. Alfred Korzybski (the founder of General Semantics) always urged people to "do it—don't talk about it!"; or "show it, don't describe it!" Prepare a short paper attempting to use several methods to describe to others something like a musical instrument or tool or machine—i.e., dictionary definition; your own verbal description, diagram or picture, etc. Then bring a "real one" to class and demonstrate it and how it is used if you are familiar with it.

11. Worded instructions that accompany "do-it-yourself" kits often turn out to be very confusing, despite introductory statements such as, "*anyone* with a few basic tools can assemble this in a matter of minutes." Bring to class an "easy to assemble" instruction guide for a model airplane kit, bicycle, tent, etc., and read or project or duplicate, showing the difficult terms, confusing step-by-step directions, or missing parts that frustrate the average person.

Picture-Making Class Exercise #1—"The What-is-it? Animal"

Have everyone in class take a sheet of paper and, as the teacher reads this description of a common North American animal from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, attempt to draw it and name it:

> It is small with a long nose, ears, and tail, the latter being naked and prehensile. The opposable first hind toe is clawless and the tip is expanded into a flat pad. The other digits all bear claws. The best known species is about the size of a cat, gray in color, the fur being wooly.

When everyone has finished drawing and naming this animal, collect the pictures and show the variations of interpretations to the class. Then turn to Appendix A for the artist's picture and the animal's name.

Picture-Making Exercise # 2

The following verbal picture-making instructions should describe two rather common household objects. Have several volunteer students go to the blackboard and, with chalk, follow through the directions read by teacher or a volunteer student, slowly and clearly:

1. Draw parallel vertical lines about an inch apart, starting at your waist level to a point near the top of your shoulders.

2. Draw a horizontal line about 15 inches long across the top of the vertical lines drawn in step 1.

3. About 10 inches above the line drawn in step 2, center a shorter line 10 inches long parallel to the first line. Join the extremities of these lines so that the figure will describe a trapezoid.

4. At the bottom of the vertical parallel lines and centered, transcribe a half-circle with the curved side up, the diameter being about 8 inches long.

5. Extend the diameter line of this half-circle about 3 inches to the right and left, and about an inch below it draw a line

parallel to it, closing the ends of this very shallow rectangular base for the whole figure.

6. Midway between the point where the vertical parallel lines meet the longer line at the top of your drawing and the left extremity of this line, draw a vertical line about 6 inches long and parallel to the lines to your right.

7. At the bottom of this line, draw a very small circle about ½-inch in diameter.

When a recognizable object emerges, the artists will label what they think they drew and return to their seats. Another group of students go to the board near and to the right of the figures drawn and proceed to follow these directions:

1. To the right of this figure draw a rectangle somewhat wider than it is high and about half the size of the original figure to the left.

2. Within this rectangle draw another smaller rectangle more to the top than the bottom of the larger rectangle. Round off the corners of this inner rectangle.

3. Directly beneath this round-cornered rectangle and spaced equi-distant from the extremities of the bottom line of same, draw three small circles about 2 inches in diameter.

4. From the center of the top of the larger rectangle draw two lines upward and away from each other about 12 inches long.

5. Complete the drawing as you may now recognize it, and take your seats. It should be obvious to you and the class what you have drawn.

To point out how very essential language is to human life, consider how quickly these figures could have been completed if you were simply told to draw your mental picture of a floor lamp or a T.V. set. If given such a direction, would there have been a greater variety of sizes, shapes, etc. than occurred in the above exercise? What does this tell us about the nature of the mental images we carry around with us as that reflect referents (real objects)?

Further Questions to Consider:

1. Of those who tried to follow directions, at what point or points did the directions become confusing?

2. What pre-knowledge or familiarity with school subjects does one need to complete successfully a drawing from instructions like these?

3. Why would these instructions be almost meaningless to an Eskimo, even if he was an English-speaker?

4. Do you think more people than not (alive today) could draw a reasonably accurate picture of the state, province, or country they live in? (As a class exercise on paper, or with volunteers at the board, try to draw the outline of the state, province, or bounderied territory you live in. Then locate the city or town you live in or near on your map. Compare it with an actual printed map if one is available.)

5. In giving someone else directions to get to a location that *you* are familiar with and *they* are not, what are some things to keep in mind that will help eliminate confusion in the listener?

An old Chinese proverb says that "A picture is worth 5000 words." Why 5000? Could any number of words adequately describe da Vinci's "The Last Supper" or a modern, non-representational, abstract painting?

Directions—One More Time!

Direction-Following Exercise

(This is a timed test. You have three minutes only.)

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this exercise.
3. Circle the "NAME" in sentence two.
4. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.

5. Put an "X" in each square.

6. Put a circle around each square.

7. Sign your name under the title of this exercise.

8. Put a circle completely around sentence number seven.

9. Put an "X" in the lower left-hand corner of this page.

10. Draw a triangle around the "X" you just put down.

11. To the right of this sentence, multiply 703 by 66.

12. Draw a rectangle around the word "corner" in sentence four.

13. Call out your first name when you get this far along.

14. If you think you have followed directions carefully to this point, stomp your foot on the floor three times.

15. On the reverse side of this paper, add 8950 and 9855.

16. Put a circle around your answer and put a square around the circle.

17. In an audible whisper, count from ten to one backwards.

18. Put a circle around every other odd number on this page.

19. If you are the first person to reach this point, call out, "I AM THE FIRST PERSON TO THIS POINT, AND I AM THE LEADER IN FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS."

20. "X" out all the quotation marks on this page.

21. Pause briefly—take three very deep breaths, and whistle the first line of the "Star Spangled Banner."

22. Call out, "I AM NEARLY FINISHED. I HAVE FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS."

23. Put a line through the previous sentence.

24. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only sentences one and two.

4

LANGUAGE AND YOUR SELF-IMAGE

"I am what I am, and that's all I am."

—Popeye

Case History

Toward the end of the 10th grade, Cheryl Anthony was getting into more and more arguments and difficulties in school with her teachers and friends. These were usually followed by longer and longer periods of withdrawal from social activities, sitting alone at school or in her room, dwelling upon the strange things that were happening to her. She was letting her schoolwork fall behind, reading novels and short stories about alienated, mixed-up kids; indulging in self-pity (and enjoying it).

Cheryl's mom and dad were beginning to worry about the recent change in her personality—at first attributing it to "growing up," but troubled, nevertheless, because she had, until lately, "made friends" easily, and was cheerful and enthused over her success in school and the fun she had at dances and football games. They were especially upset because she was seeing more often Jeff Smith, a boy, they learned, who had been in several "scrapes" involving stolen cars and drugs. They didn't like his appearance or what they knew of his background, but avoided expressing their displeasure to Cheryl for fear of her reacting negatively.

Several attempts to talk to Cheryl about the change in her attitudes and how "different" she was from the girl she "had been"

were ineffective and "turned her off" even more. Her only responses were that nobody "understood her" and that her teachers "picked on her."

One morning they found a note saying she was leaving home for a while to "find herself" because she knew she wasn't wanted or "appreciated" by anyone but Jeff!

Script

Most younger people follow a "script" which they (consciously or unconciously) tend to follow through the formative years, almost as if it were written for them by some unseen author who observes the way a family gets along, sets its values, or reacts to everyday living situations.

The Anthonys rarely discussed things openly or tried to "iron out" problems by "leveling" with each other. The main concern of Cheryl's mom and dad was in appearances—what their friends or neighbors thought of them; what the report card showed; etc. Conversational expressions such as "nice girls don't," "good students should," "what would our friends think?" etc., more often than not ended most family discussions when they occurred (which was seldom).

Cheryl came to feel she must measure up to the "should" image created by her parents and other adults. Consequently, she should be "pleasant," "agreeable," "chaste," "intelligent," "conscientious," "attractive," etc.

When she began to see herself as "gawky" rather than "cute," and her grades in school fell off, teachers questioned her ability (compared to her older brother) and even her sincerity, and her personality began to change. . . . She wasn't the girl she thought she should be. . . . Things weren't working out according to a structured plan based on her parents' expectations . . . even *her own*!

Awareness of Self-Image

What we think of ourselves is *most important* in coping with the many living problems we face everyday. Unfortunately, there are major obstacles that get in the way of developing a healthy "self-image" and then not letting it become an easy *target* for all kinds of challenges, "put-downs," humiliations, etc., when we are dealing with others.

For one thing, we often rely upon words or verbal descriptions that we carry round in our heads like a big shield to use defensively when we interact with people around us. As we have found, language is a most inexact medium of expression for describing things either outside our skin or the mental constructs we form of them inside our heads, especially things like *character traits.*

Secondly, we are encouraged by psychologists and educational specialists to develop a very distinct self-image or self-concept. The assumption here is that this will give us more confidence and a positive attitude toward ourselves and the impression we make on others. Many people now feel this may be a "wrong-headed" approach: that it breeds un-sane semantic reactions (s.r.) and relies too heavily upon words used to describe the way people are, which, too often, may be "false to facts."

Answer the following questions or mentalize them as well as you can:

1. Take several minutes and form your own self-image as briefly and accurately as you can. Then write it down.

2. In what way or by what methods might others (parents, teachers, or classmates) challenge or endanger your self-image, either intentionally or unintentionally, by remarks, facial expressions, etc.?

3. How might *any* disagreement with your views or opinions serve as a "put-down" to you or what you think you are?

4. Is it ever possible to "see ourselves as others see us?" Is it ever possible to know ourselves as reliably as we think we do? Explain.

5. Would life be livable if we were aware of ourselves as fully as we are of others?

6. How accurate can our judgement of others be? What factors must we consider that may distort that judgement and render it "false to facts"?

7. Is language a "help" or a "hindrance" in any accurate appraisal of a person, a racial group, a political party, or a religious sect?

8. What is wrong (or at least inaccurate) with the common tendency to label or categorize people as "school teachers," "politicians," "squares," "drop-outs," "Polacks," "commies," etc.?

Mathematicians often sub-label number or letter concepts as a means of differentiating thusly: A_1 or A_2. Would it not be just as helpful to sub-label or *INDEX* such things as men, occupations, organizations, etc., or at least mentalize them as being different individually? Wouldn't it be far better to think of people as $Policeman_1$ who is not $Policeman_2$ who is quite different from $Policeman_3$, etc.?

For those in the class who would like to look further into the historical sources of how categorizing came about, read the following:

Historians have found that the main source of our tendency to group and label people in categories or classifications originated with Greek philosophy, mostly through Aristotle, its most widely accepted spokesman. When this profound and venerable thinker wrote down his many ideas in a number of books that have come down to us through the centuries, there become locked into our language system and thinking patterns a habit of putting objects, ideas, species, etc., that resemble each other into classifications that distinguished them from one another.

Aristotle began by stating that "an apple was an apple" (reasonable enough!) because men of his time seemed to agree on the matter. He then went on to state that an apple cannot be a dog, or at least an apple and a dog at the same time. Neither could an apple be an olive, even if they were shaped somewhat alike. This method of classifying things seems harmless enough; however, if we extend Aristotelian logic to extremes (which men have done since), we come up with the erroneous conclusion that, for example, a man cannot be an auto mechanic, a husband, a poet, or a gardener simultaneously! This is absurd. Since then, modern science and philosophy have succeeded in replacing this form of logic with one that more closely resembles reality. *Unfortunately*, our language system (and most Indo-European languages) retain this Aristotelian oversimplification from his sytem of logic.

Other harmful legacies that we have inherited from Greek thought are: (1) being encouraged to seek out *similarities* rather than *differences* in things, ideas, people, etc.; and (2) forming value-judgements in a two-value system, either *this* or *that,* good or bad, etc. (more on this later).

One last point before we continue with our questions. When we assume so easily that we have concluded a subject, described a thing, or classified an object in our minds, it is only a short step to imagine we can identify words with objects, words with abstract ideas, objects with events, cars with love, hate with school, T.V. with commercials, green with envy, and so on until our semantic structures are so hopelessly out of fit with reality that verbal and mental breakdowns occur continually. Our semantic orientations often lead us to (as Korsybski puts it) delusional behavior, un-sane reactions to language, muddled thinking, argumentation, and other destructive behavior patterns that plague much of human society.

Instead of using the process of classifying and categorizing the various items we see and mentalize in our environment as a tool in learning and living in the universe, it has become, within our language system and thinking processes, a very great obstruction.

9. What difficulties arise from making "generalities" or attaching "labels" to ideas or people (including ourselves), i.e., "the earth is round," "English is a drag," "grouchy parent," "stupid dingbat," "crooked politician," etc.

10. What social problems and irrational judgements result from such slogans as "lawyers are corrupt," "teenagers are reckless drivers," "grownups are kill-joys"?

11. Mr. Hayakawa has said that most people "let their language do their thinking for them." How might this be possible?

12. J. Samuel Bois in his experiences with patients as a psychologist-consultant, has found that many people have actually "thought themselves into becoming homosexuals." What might language and internalizing thought have to do with this predicament?

Plato and Universals

Aristotle's teacher Plato devised a theory which held that the *idea* of a thing was *more real than the thing itself*. Consequently, the idea of a table existed factually, whereas a table was an *illusion*. "Redness" had more objective substance than the color red as it appeared

to the eye from a pigmented surface! All these ideas, or "universals," existed somewhere, perhaps in the thoughts of men or in some sort of Platonic heaven and came from the mind of a universal good or "God." Admittedly, this was a most intriguing theory. From it, not only came Plato's conception of how language originated—each object had a name, which was simply another of its characteristics, and man had simply to dig it out and agree as to its being real—but also the highly abstract vocabulary and pronouncements of the realness of such concepts as "virtue," "goodness," "tragedy," "evil," "the soul," etc. No wonder scientific inquiry and experimentation were discouraged for so many centuries after the great Greek period of cultural and philosophical development over 2000 years ago!

12. Do you think the color "blue" can ever exist apart from an object that "appears" blue (as we accept the idea of blue)? Can a student from a science class explain the concept of colors as they are transmitted from an object through the eye and to the brain?

13. Is it possible for an account of a basketball game on the sports page of a newpaper to come close to a complete description of it? What elements, often important, are missing?

14. If the word stock (vocabulary) of English were drastically reduced from its present size (about 800,000 words), would it describe objects more accurately? Why or why not?

15. If all men could agree upon a certain body of truths (formulated in the past) and sometimes referred to as "first principals" and represented by an exact and *unchanging* language, would most, if not all, human disagreements and problems cease to exist? Why or why not? Is such a thing likely to happen?

16. If language is such an arbitrary (subject to whim or fancy) and inexact representation of reality, what difficulties present themselves in English or language classes as a result? In other words (or more words), do the red-penciling and teacher comments on written compositions indicate: (1) the

student's inability to express his or her thoughts clearly; (2) the teacher's failure to understand them; (3) the inadequacy of language to cope with communication problems; or (4) a combination of all three? Explain your answer.

17. Do you think language or communication problems are as hopeless or unsolvable as these considerations would lead us to believe? Explain and give possible methods of overcoming these difficulties.

NAMES

I knew a lad they call him bad;
He once pushed baby brother
And now he keeps on getting blamed
For one thing or another.

Sticks and stones may break our bones,
But names can also get us—
You'd be surprised how certain words
Can worry or upset us.
Now when you call your pal a name,
It sticks there like a label;
And when he tries to rub it off,
Sometimes he isn't able.

To become a better pal,
It is necessary
To watch out for label-words
In your vocabulary.

Follow-Up Projects (Self-image and labeling)

1. Prepare a visual for the bulletin board that depicts the problems one gets into in developing an oversimplified self-image, Aristotle's or Plato's outmoded theories of logic, language origins, etc., or one that presents with pictures or printed language the various slogans, generalizations, etc., that distort reality.

2. Prepare a role-playing skit or socio-drama that reveals the problems that occur when someone's "self-image" is challenged, or the difference between what one thinks of himself and what others do.

3. Prepare and present an "alter-ego" (real person usually not doing the actual talking to others) sketch in which four people representing, in pairs, two people conversing with each other and the alter-egos standing behind them supplying what they are *really* thinking about each other. Try to reinforce Hayakawa's statement about how language does one's thinking for himself, as well as the hypocrisy that accompanies what we say and what we really feel about others' appearance, views, etc.

4. Prepare a visual that includes all the character traits or personal qualities and their opposites showing how oversimplified they are.

5. Compose a composite description or character sketch of a teacher or the principal or some other member of school office staff. Then ask them to write one of themselves and compare the results and feed them back to the class, pointing out differences or similarities of viewpoints, ways of assessing character traits, etc.

6. Try to find out from the school office just what information on you and others has been accumulated on the "permanent records" which is usually witheld from you and your parents but that may be seen or used by others. Ask why the administration can justify keeping this information hidden from you. Discuss what kinds of data are contained in the record file that educators feel is essential in helping you fit into the school community.

7. Bring to class two biographical sketches of some prominent people, living or dead, using a dictionary of national or international biography, an encyclopedia, or history book, and discuss all that these simplified accounts leave out and why. Concentrate on figures around whom legends have grown or to whom labels have been applied such as George Washington, Babe Ruth, Daniel Boone, etc.

8. An interesting project that a group may develop is having everyone in class complete a check list of character traits—intelligence; attractiveness; sincerity; sex appeal; etc. (using a scale of 1 to 5 for very apparent-not apparent)—on any five classmates they think they have come to know rather well. Have each student rate himself as well. Collect the personality rating sheets. Prepare a graph sheet showing, by connecting average grade-points with lines, just what others in class think of them compared to what they think of themselves. Distribute results to classmates and discuss.

As a follow-up to #8, if it is done, read the results of a very thorough and computerized evaluation study made recently that points out how curiously we judge ourselves and others—how grade-point averages, sex, ability to express oneself, etc., affects what most people think of a person. This account is contained in Appendix B.

Language in a Changing Universe

The story is told of a busy man with a large family who one day called one of his sons in and asked him how old he was. When the boy told him he was 14, his dad quickly replied that he'd never amount to anything . . . "When I was that age, I was 16 . . . . and *married*!"

If the physical structure of a pencil alters from day to day, however so slightly, imagine how drastically change occurs in such a complex organism as the *human being.* Yet, we, through long-established habit, think of Johnny Smith as if the only thing different about him since we saw him last is the length of his hair or the weight or length of his body.

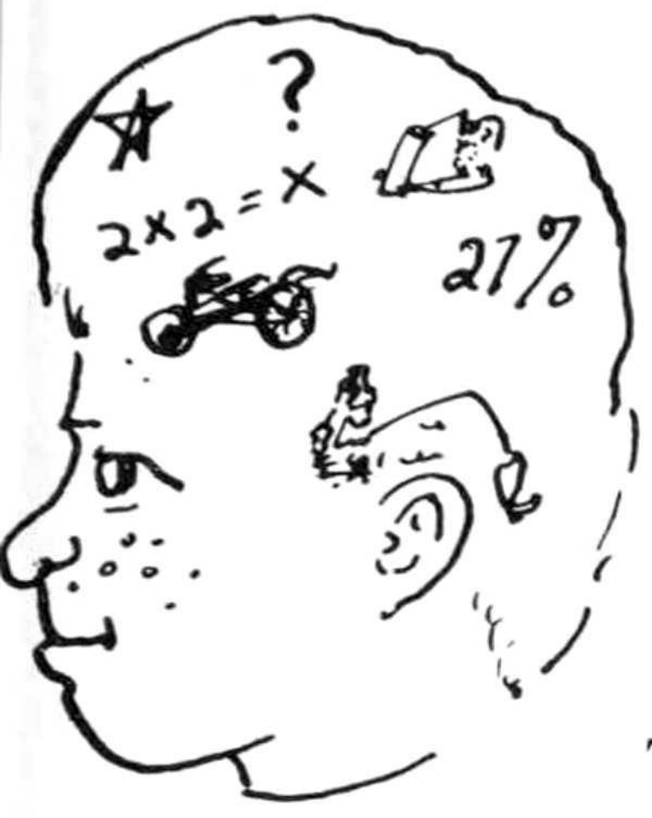
This failure to expect change is because all we have to base our judgement of Johnny on is his *appearance*. The innumerable sights, sounds, physical involvements, and personal encounters with others he has experienced are hidden from us—unless, of course, we may have seen a great deal of him during the past year.

Nevertheless, we may still think of him as "good ol' Johnny" or "Johnny the jerk, who never could get algebra" or "never-a-dull-moment Johnny." An "open mind" (with all our receptors functioning) should enable us to accept Johnny as not only different from Carl, his brother, but as a different person from the one we knew when last we saw him.

This requires an additional indexing system when we evaluate

people or make assumptions about them—Johnny Smith 1975 as different from Johnny Smith 1974.

Indeed it would be very strange
If not a thing would ever change;
It really would be quite a shame
If everything would stay the same



Boys and girls would never grow,
Streams and seas would never flow,
We'd never get the food we need,
For what would happen to the seed?

Calves would never turn to cows,
Piglets wouldn't turn to sows,
No lamb would get to be a sheep,
The whole wide world would be asleep.

Johnny Smith
1974

But it so happens we were born
Into a world of "goings on,"
And even as we sing this song
We are changing all along. . . .

Johnny Smith
1975

5

ABSTRACTIONS AND ABSTRACTING

"penny—money—assets—wealth

apple—fruit—produce—affluence—G.N.P.

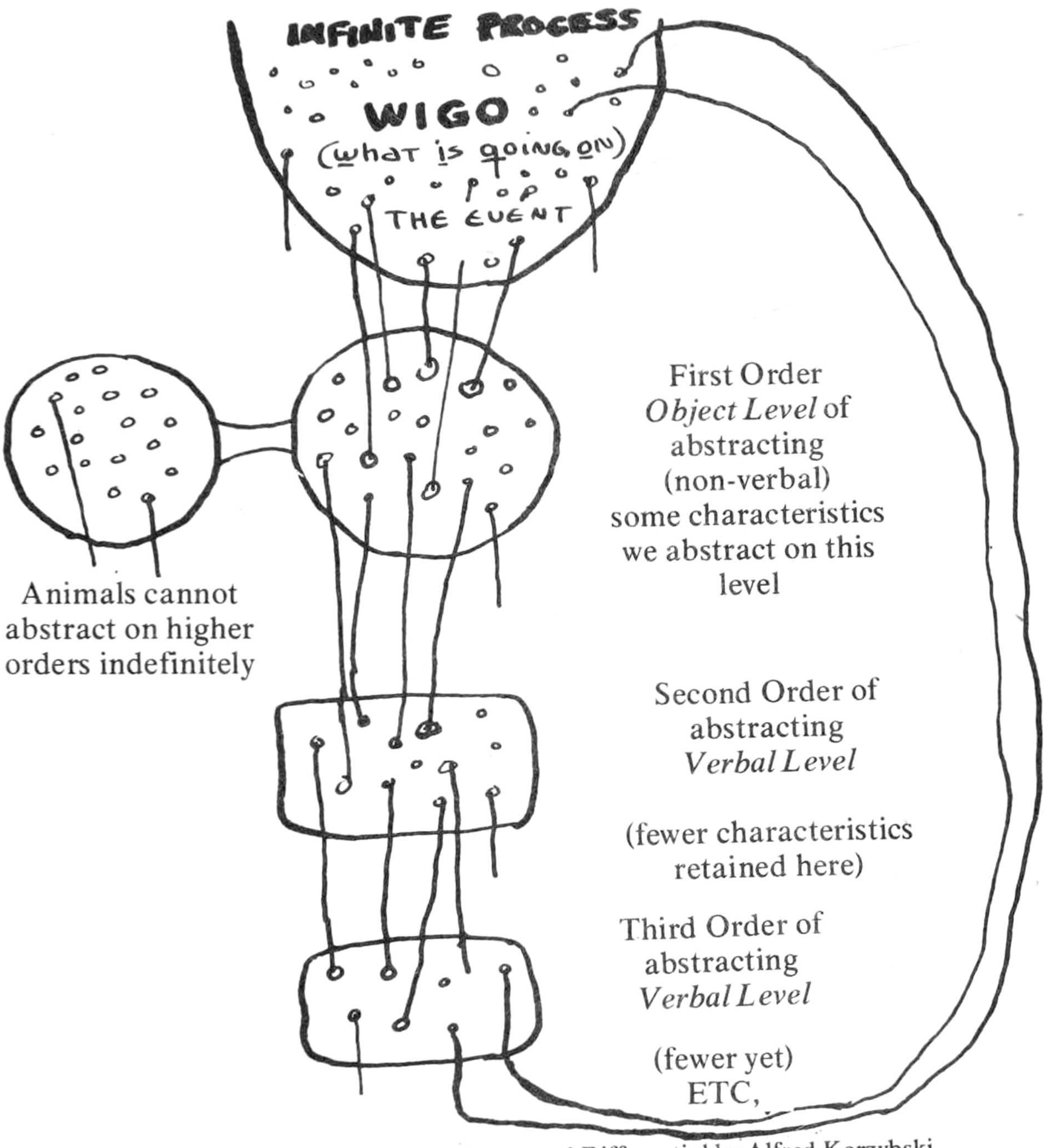
Mary Jones 1975—girl—women—sex—beauty. . . ."

In general semantics, it is felt that "abstracting" and an awareness of the *many* levels of abstractions is the very foundation of learning to perceive (see, experience) objects and events and evaluate them more carefully, to understand them more clearly, and to communicate what they mean to us and others more *usefully* and *objectively*.

When we refer to a word or term as "specific" or "concrete" (perhaps meaning that its referent readily identifies an object or thing with a high degree of precision), we must always keep in mind that the *word* is not the *thing*! Also, that the combination of letters or numbers is only a generally agreed upon *symbol* of an object.

Nevertheless, we usually assume that the word "banjo," for instance, is meant to identify a type of stringed instrument different from other stringed instruments of a similar shape, that it can be illustrated in a picture rather clearly, or that a *real* banjo may respond to the various senses such as sight, touch, hearing, etc. It is then referred to as a "specific" word or term. Traditional grammar would list the word among the nouns, and the newer structural or generative grammars as one of the types of "form class" words that dictionaries "attempt" to define. It is known or considered a "tangible" thing—a banjo (though all banjos are not alike). The word, however, classifies and has a distinct, knowable, recognizable *referent.* (The foregoing is

STRUCTURAL DIFFERENTIAL*
A model of the abstraction process



* Adapted by permission from the Structural Differential by Alfred Korzybski

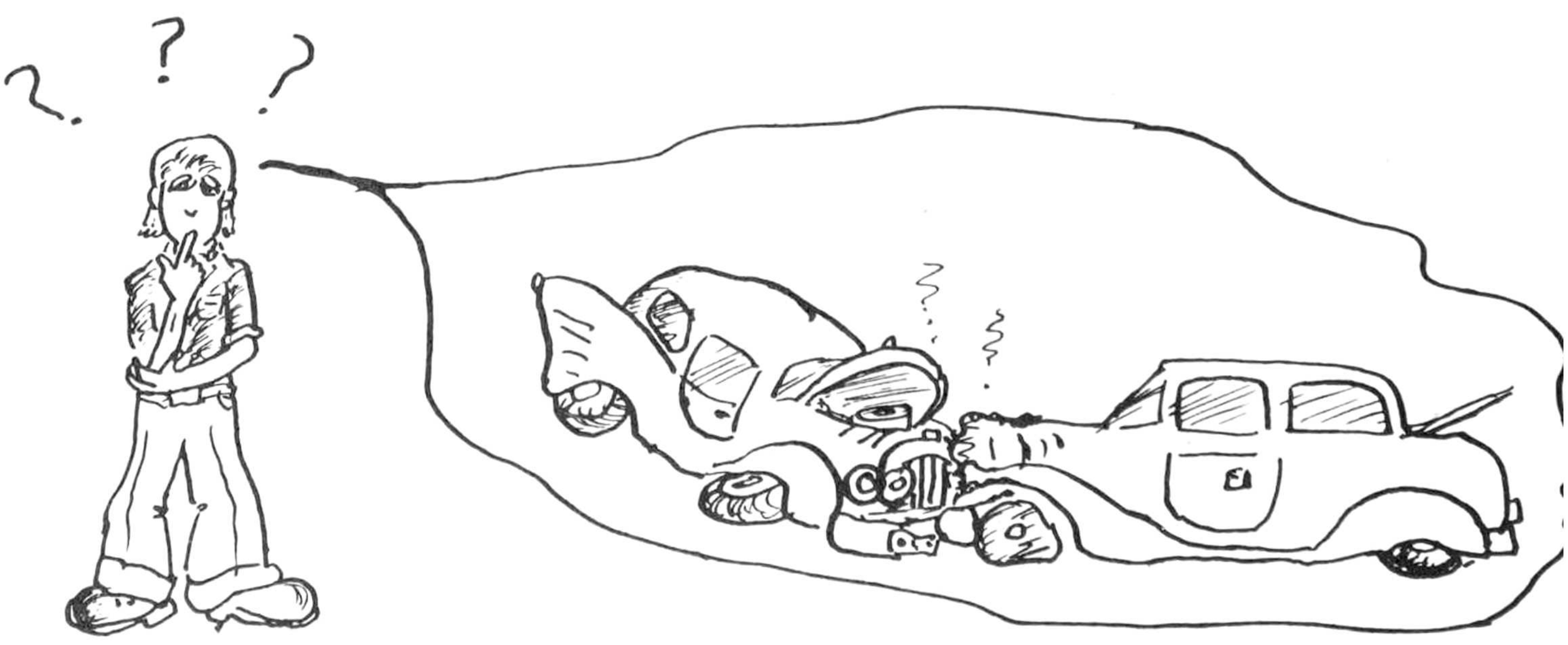
We abstract (select) only a few parts of what we see or feel or react to in any event) and, as we abstract further (on higher levels) we leave out ever more parts of the original experience indicated by the first order (objective level). Keep in mind that the abstracting process is on-going, involving all functions of the organism-as-a-whole-in-its-environment in an infinite manner as indicated by the open-ended parabola (top) with higher order characteristics returning to the original event.

an attempt to be as accurate and precise an explanation as the author can compose from some familiarity with this instrument. Notice how inconclusive it still is?)

Many of you have probably heard of a type of word that classifies what is referred to as an *abstraction*. An abstract term may name something that *does not* make our senses respond directly the same way a word like "banjo" does. An abstraction may have referents that describe a quality such as "beauty" or "vividness" or a trait like "humility" or "wisdom"—a condition that attaches itself to people such as "wealth" or "poverty" or a visible situation that is indistinct but observable such as "filth" or "orderliness."

What is seldom, if ever, considered is that there are *varying* degrees or *levels* of abstractions. This awareness forms a major basis for Alfred Korzybski's famous book *Science and Sanity* (1933). His mental model is called a "structural differential" and is illustrated below. It consists of an open-ended parabola with a number of small dots in it representing the many characteristics or parts of an event or object we perceive or experience. From these we abstract or mentalize or *select* a small number of its parts as we experience or recollect it or tell it moments later. The suceeding levels or orders of experience that occur after the original leave out more and more of the data as the abstracting process continues.

Suppose we witness an automobile accident. Two cars collide at a street intersection. What we see, hear, and imagine occurred can only be a fraction of what *actually* occurred, which involved two very complex machines and the even more complex occupants of the cars.



You approach the scene of the accident and observe what has happened when the vehicles, flesh, and metal have come to rest (2nd-order experience). Someone comes running up to you and asks what happened. From all the variety of events first observed, you can recollect only a few and relate fewer. A patrolman arrives and wants some verification from you as a witness as to what happened. The measuring of distances and description of cars and directions of vehicles is written down. You finally end up providing only your name in case you may be needed for legal settlement if warranted. You go home and tell breathtakingly what you have seen to the members of your family . . . that's what you saw (fifth-order experience) but the mental image is blurred and you can't quite remember the colors or makes of the cars. When you are asked who was driving the car most negligently, you may pre-judge that it was the middle-aged woman who was the most confused about what happened. Your friend remarks (and you agree) that "it's too bad women are such rotten drivers."

By now what you are saying about what you thought you saw is so far removed from actuality that it hardly resembles the event at all.

By modern standards and computations it has been calculated that if every part of the human organism that is activated in the simple (?) process of stooping over and picking a flower were represented by a dot the size of a pin head, the dots would cover the earth's surface about three times! Such is the complexity of the psycho-physical involvement required in performing only one of the hundreds of thousands of daily bodily activities! Yet how certain most people are that "it's true because I saw it with my own eyes," or "everybody knows" or "it's crystal clear that," etc.

Korzybski's "structural differential" is followed by a student devised abstraction model using the various verbal levels of money.

In the preceding abstraction model a Lincoln head penny is used, though any specific referent like a chair or an apple or a horse may be used to run up or down the ladder from one level to the next (once you have become used to it.) It is also important to note that one's ability to abstract distinguishes a human from lower species. Korzybski referred to animals as "space-binders" since they possess merely a physical mobility enabling them to move around and adapt to their environment. Man has the unique ability to "bind time" as well, utilizing the past for his own knowledge and skill in coping with his surroundings, as well as structuring his future.

It is remarkable how most people go through life almost com-

An Abstraction Model of Verbal Levels Related to Money (begin at bottom)

AFFLUENCE

Higher abstraction than wealth which involves non-tangibles: such things as "ease of living" due to more than sufficient money, etc.

WEALTH

High level abstraction (the referant might be a multi-millionaire)

ASSETS

One's valued (tangible) possessions which may include stocks, bonds, deeds to property as well as cash

MONEY

Includes paper currency as well as coins, etc.

COIN

Any metallic unit of monetary exchange (nickels, dimes, quarters as well as pennies)

Any of several million U.S. (Denver) minted pennies of which the original, real one (below) is only one (verbal only)

1974 E Lincoln Head Penny

A real 1974 D Lincoln head penny that we may see or touch, etc.

Raw Materials (copper—steel and technology used in producing coin, etc.)

Abstraction models may be easily devised such as the one above from most any object that lends itself to verbalizing into ever higher levels of abstraction. When the referent becomes vague (inexact) it is wise to use quote marks or the hand signal for quotes as Korzybski did in his lectures so as to become conscious of a lack of a real referant (what the word is used to symbolize).

pletely unaware of the abstracting process, or become "stuck" on one level in the manner in which they evaluate their surroundings and attempt to communicate them to others. The many predicaments and serious problems that befall us almost always stem from our failure to remain conscious of how we abstract and interpret what happens outside our skins.

Once you understand the significance of abstraction models and how they help you differentiate between levels, a few questions and exercises will further show you how they apply to actual living situations. Though there are many levels and degrees of abstractions, for practical purposes we may use only about four in considering the following, i.e., level (1) "chair"; (2) "furniture"; (3) "property"; (4) "real estate":

1. Not all types of words or concepts will submit to being placed on various levels of abstraction. Can you think of several?

2. At which of any four levels would you place a housewife who apparently talks and thinks of little beyond such things as recipes, soaps, dresses, drapes, beauty aids, health remedies, or household appliances in her home? Explain your answer.

3. Suppose another housewife usually converses about little beyond such concepts as her husband's or her income, a neighbor's marital troubles, her children's success in school, the rising costs of groceries, the excessive (to her) publicity given to the wedding of some socially prominent person in the community, the troublesome behavior of a nearby so-called "teenager." At what level of abstraction would you place her? What other statements might be made about the obviously restricted awareness of her environment?

4. At what level of abstraction would you place a "so-called politician who remarks in a campaign speech that "motherhood, flag, and the gross national product are being endangered by the inflationary trendy of the present administration and its burgeoning bureaucracy"? Can you reduce this statement to a much lower level of abstraction?

5. How might you account for the tendency of the above-

mentioned politician or a university president using such a high level of abstraction in their public statements?

6. What should we constantly strive to achieve in our efforts to communicate regarding the various levels of abstraction?

7. Would you admire the "so-called" housewife (in #2 above) as a "down-to-earth," or "just-plain-folks," "common-as-an-old-shoe" type of person, or condemn her as "stupid," narrow and short-sighted, or "simple-minded"? If you either admire her or condemn her, what does your *value judgment* tell you about yourself?

8. Is the medical, legal, teaching, or any other profession unwise or semantically "wrong-headed" in using professionally centered terms (jargon) in expressing concepts peculiar to those professions but which are usually not understood by the average layman? Explain.

9. When Roman Catholics abandoned Latin in most countries as the language of its church service after centuries, why would some Catholics welcome the change and others regret (if not actually obstruct) it?

10. If an educator (term usually applied to an upper-level member of the schooling business) states that a "certain disadvantaged preadolescent has difficulty adjusting to the behavior patterns of his peer group," what is he probably trying to say? How might you account for this exceedingly round-about method of expressing a rather simple fact? What are euphemisms?

11. If every different branch of knowledge, profession, or occupation within our complex society of today requires its own highly technical vocabulary, is there any chance for the average, moderately well-educated person to become familiar with all of them? What might be the alternatives to either removing or enlarging the language barriers suggested above?

12. Raise the following statements to a much higher level of abstraction:

a. Jimmy Pynhead took apples from a neighbor's tree

at 9:43 P.M., September 18, 1973. (example: Young kids can't be trusted!)

b. The New York Stock Exchange dropped 67 points today, August 3, 1974, to its lowest point since October 19, 1933.

c. Veronica Snerdley misspelled four words on one page of her theme on "Snowflakes" yesterday.

d. Fourteen people were killed or injured by snowmobiles over the weekend.

13. Reduce the following statements to a much lower level of abstraction:

a. The whole world is going to hell in a handbasket!
b. You can't trust anyone over thirty.
c. A friend in need is a pest!
d. There's no fool like an old fool.

14. Discuss briefly or list the various kinds of unfair stereotyping (labeling) involved in questions two through ten above.

Follow-Up Projects

1. Select from a textbook or magazine some example of highly abstract language (jargon) and translate it (reduce it to a lower level of abstraction), and read it to class or display it on the board.

2. Select some prose passage from this unit that by its highly abstract language (to you) is very difficult to understand and reduce it to a more understandable level.

3. Take three examples of a comparatively low-level prose passage and re-write them on a much higher level (directions on a package, instructions for assembling or explaining a theory, etc.).

4. Prepare a visual for the bulletin board or put on a transparency or ditto copies a mental model of the abstraction levels, or a cartoon that shows a communication

barrier resulting from some lack of awareness of abstraction levels, or the failure of a person to realize that someone else may not understand the words they are using.

5. Prepare a passage of slang terms or idioms used by teenagers, rock musicians, a minority group, etc., and see if the teacher or your classmates can understand it. Then interpret it as you may know it.

6. Prepare a discussion of just why students do not ask teachers or speakers to explain or illustrate expressions or the highly abstract language they use.

7. If there are any foreign exchange students in your school, interview them and ask them what they have the most difficulty understanding from the speech patterns of those in your school community. Feed back to class or have foreign students talk to the class about their experiences trying to grasp idioms, slang terms, etc.

8. Using a dictionary of slang or H. L. Mencken's highly readable and informative book *The American Language*, prepare a report on euphemisms or jargon or argot and present it to the class, or make a poster showing the recognizable synonyms of special vocabularies.

9. Prepare a role skit in which a student protrays a doctor or lawyer using highly technical language in explaining something of great importance to the listener. Get some help from texts or trade journals, or directly from a person involved in that profession, in setting up the skit. Use a professional directly in using terminology and explaining what it may mean in common, easy-to-understand language. If your school has access to a video-tape recorder and T.V. camera or cassette sound recorder, use them to present your sketch or class project to your class or others interested.

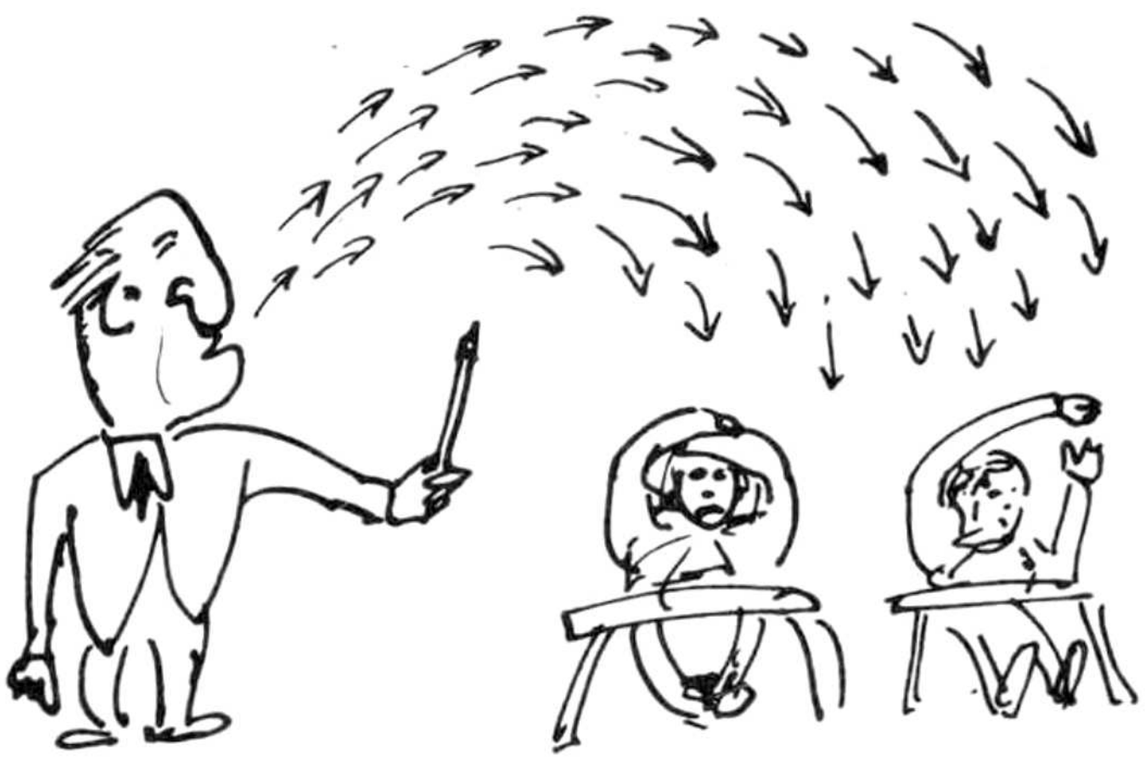
10. Select a passage or stanza of highly abstract poetry (or better yet, compose a poem yourself) and reduce it to a lower level of abstraction. Notice how poetry loses its impact and flavor when the wordage is changed or simplified or complicated.

GETTING "IT" ACROSS (T)

1.

2.

3.



4.

5.

6.

*Words***Obfuscation***Gobbledegook****
*Doublspeak***Jaberwocky***N'Such*

To illustrate the various types of communication problems that occur to most of us every day (especially in the classroom), the series of drawings below is one artist's conception of the most common variety. No captions are necessary to explain the semantic situations that each cartoon depicts. As is often the case, the speaker carries on his harangue or discourse or lecture under the assumption that the listener is being affected, informed, persuaded, or coerced for the *maximum* benefit of the receiver by what he is saying (?).

As you scan the different situations, try to recollect how often you have been bored, "turned off," or in one way or another made miserable when caught in traps by this type of speaker. As Mark Twain once said, "There is no worse death than being *talked to death.*"

Remember, too, that your listener may not want to hear all *you* think he might be interested in or all *you think* he should know!

Making A Point—Follow-Up

1. Taking each cartoon (left to right—top to bottom) discuss briefly the nature of each semantic situation in the six cartoons. Consider such elements as the type of language, level of abstraction, purpose of the speaker, the receptivity of the listener, and the attitudes of both. Relate the situations to those you may have experienced in a classroom, a church service, or any other assembly.

2. Caption each cartoon in such a way that it summarizes in as few words as possible the kinds of verbal "traps" we all get caught in.

3. Draw or depict some type of semantic problem or obstruction to communication, similar to the ones depicted in the cartoons, for the bulletin board. Submit them to the school newspaper.

Things To Keep In Mind Throughout Life

Talk less, listen more! Be courteous in your conversational habits!

Even the attention span of a computer is limited!
FALSE INFORMATION BREEDS INSANITY!
Senseless talk causes more human misery than all the bacteria in the world!

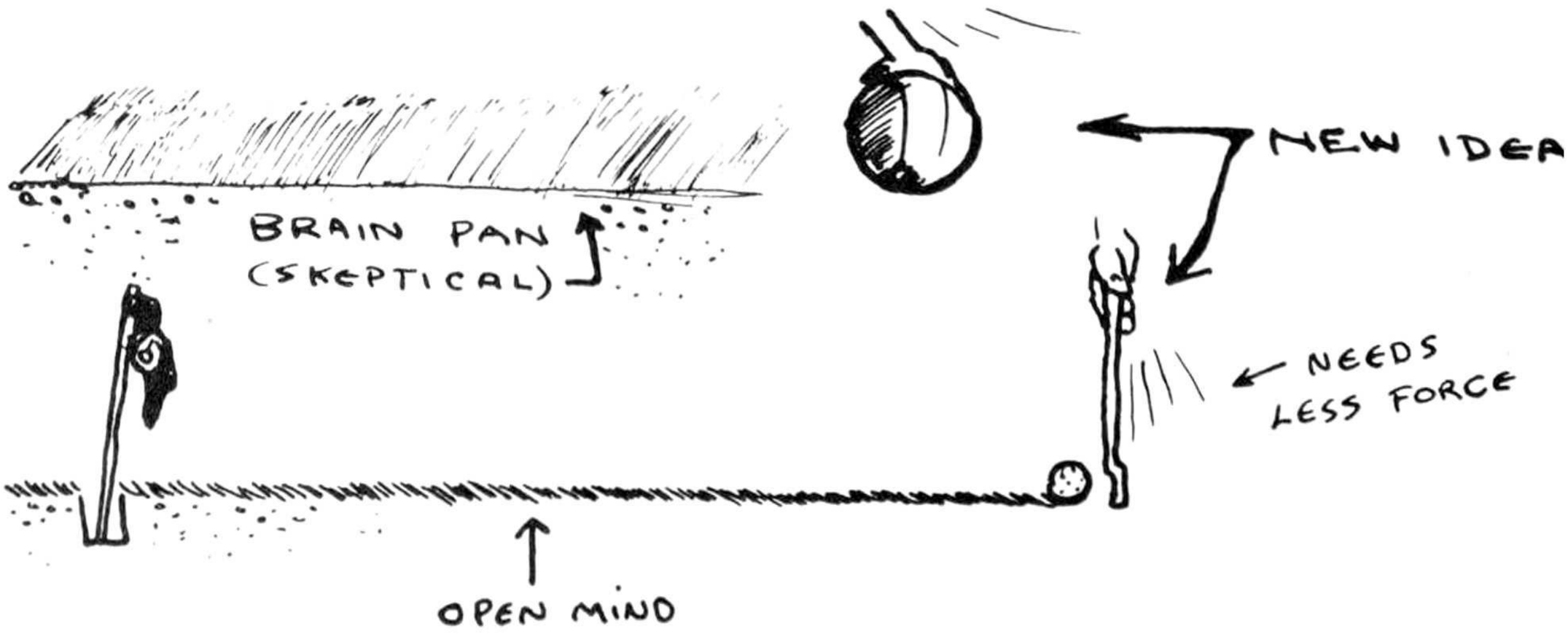
Supply your own grafitti below

6

REINFORCE, REVIEW, AND DISCUSS

It is helpful at this time to go over and discuss the various terms, attitudes and awarenesses you have covered thus far in the general semantics unit. As a class group, try to come up with anything you may recall having covered up to this point—and beyond. List the terms, expressions, or attitudes on the board as they are volunteered by members of the class. If this is overlooked, it may be a case of the material's "going in one ear and out the other."

J. Samuel Bois has made deep researches into how the human mind either rejects or tends to resist new ideas by the use of *metaphors* (illustrations or picture models that explain highly complex phenomena). They are most interesting. One of them likens the "brain pan" to a wheat field where all the grain leans in one direction, against which a basketball (new idea) is rolled. Its progress is impeded by all the elements already structured by past experience that



forms one's total orientation. Golfers are familiar with the curious bend of the grass of a golf green, with or against which they must stroke the ball harder or softer in order to get to the hole.

A friend of mine has a grandfather who still insists (seriously) that "the earth is *flat*." Though everybody is entitled to his "own opinion," think of what level of progress we would have achieved today if such "false-to-facts" information were widespread!

Though we assume that the sensitivity of the human nervous system which chanels impressions to the brain is very rapid, Mr. Bois also demonstrates that it is not nearly so efficient by pointing out that if a human giant were large enough so that his body could reach from New York City to Rio de Janiero, Brazil (a distance of several thousand miles) and a shark bit its toe on Monday, it would take a full week and a half for the message (pain) to complete the tour from the toe to the giant's brain and return in order to enable him to pull his foot out of the water. Such is the "lag" caused by the number and complexity of synopses (nerve-cell links) that transmit messages through the cortex in its ability to register, store, and feed back information, it is far less efficient due to the number of physical imperfections and distractions that inhibit information to "flow." That is why repetition and reinforcement are so necessary to get things to "stick"! (The forgoing is a *digression*, but, it is hoped, an interesting one.)

It is also wise for the instructor to get continual "feedback" from the class in the form of an evaluation sheet on which people can judge the effectiveness of the presentation of the different principles of general semantics. Here is a type of feedback sheet that may work well:

Circle the number that (to you) indicates the degree of effectiveness of the material covered from 1 (ineffective) to 5 (very effective):

Words, Objects, and Definitions	1	2	3	4	5
Decision-Making	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Image (Aristotle, Plato, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Abstractions and Abstraction Levels	1	2	3	4	5
The Questioning Device (inductive)	1	2	3	4	5
Group Activities	1	2	3	4	5
Follow-up Projects and Visuals	1	2	3	4	5
Explanatory Passages	1	2	3	4	5

If such a feedback inventory is done, have a group or volunteer student put the results on a graph and feed back to the class on duplicated sheets or on a visual or the blackboard. Discuss why some devices were more successful than others according to the "guide to learning" which introduced this course, or other elements that may have aided or hindered receptivity.

A final thing to keep in mind and practice continually is looking for and taking note of the violations or effective uses of the G.S. principles and sound communication practices in others (including teachers) and in *your own* semantic behavior. Look for them in films, in other forms of media, in advertising techniques, in literature, in conversational situations, even in forms of non verbal communication. Read some of the selections included in the Bibliography that appears at the end of the book. Try to feed back everything you may have come across that has to do with the new awareness you have acquired. Set aside a class period or part of one for such purposes.

7

USE AND MISUSE OF CATEGORIES

The following exercise deals with the problem of confusing abstraction levels—comparing unlike things, oversimplification, "allness" statements, equating objects with events, etc. Discuss each statement and point out the basic semantic flaw in each:

Use and Misuse of Categories

What's wrong with these statements?

1. Johnny, eat your peas and vegetables!
2. We can be pretty sure how women will vote, but we're not so sure about Italians or Catholics.
3. I love children, but boys get on my nerves.
4. Sleeping and books are good for you.
5. Homes ought to have windows.
6. How can a child learn unless he has a good teacher?
7. Communism and Democracy are two kinds of political systems.
8. Democracy and free enterprise are nearly synonomous terms.
9. Russians are Communists.
10. Communists are Russians.
11. A strong, vigorous woman can't really be called "feminine."
12. It's a crime to lie to your parents.
13. If he doesn't do his homework, it's because of his poor upbringing.

14. Schizophrenics are withdrawn. This person is very withdrawn. He must be schizophrenic.
15. Lazy people don't want to do much of anything. She doesn't want to do much of anything. She must be lazy.
16. "I know I shouldn't eat so much chocolate, but it's delicious."
17. It's an injustice to have to wait in line to see a movie.
18. "That driver cut me off. I'm going to get even with him." (What kind of categorical thinking occurred between the two sentences?)
19. There's going to be a bitter battle within the Republican Party now. Oh, well, a good scrap won't hurt anyone.
20. Everybody knows drinking and driving don't mix!

8

THE ALLNESS STATEMENT

"Everybody knows. . . ." "Common sense tells us. . . ." *They* say. . . ." "Clearly. . . ." "It's a well-known fact that. . . ." "No one believes. . . ."

Nothing (well almost nothing) tends to distort reality in our language structure more than the "allness" expressions which are used almost everytime we speak, read, or hear others express themselves.

"*All* the world's a stage, and *all* the people merely players" — (Shakespeare). To a playwright maybe, but not to an anthropologist or a high school sophomore. "Beauty is truth and truth is beauty; that is *all* ye know in this world; and *all* ye need to know"—(Keats). *It is*??? Then God help us!

Whenever an expression is used that implies the speaker or writer *knows* or *assumes* that a statement has a widespread acceptance among *all* members of our society, he is either (or both) misinformed and/or making a "false-to-facts" statement!

Don't be afraid to challenge the speaker who makes such an assertion. Avoid using these omniscient (*all*-knowing) devices to deceive others in your own semantic habits.

When we get to the part of this course which involves "extensional and intentional" statements, we will pursue this subject further. Until then, don't ever assume that everyone is "like-minded," obediently in accord with, universally agreed upon, receptive to, etc., *anything*!

9

TWO-VALUE JUDGMENTS

Case History:

It was the fourth day of the fall term at Central State U. A nervous buzzing ran across the General Math class as it awaited the announcement of the screening test scores. The exam was given traditionally to separate the *advanced* from the *remedial* math students. Failure to pass it meant a full semester of going over "fundamentals": reviewing, repeating, memorizing endlessly slide-

rule exercises, dividing, multiplying, adding, and subtracting fractions; computing square roots and scanning and applying logarithms.

But to Jim Turner it meant much more. Tuition fees for the coming school year had been raised to $585.00, not to mention the board and room expenses for which he had labored long and hard on a cement crew for the highway department. It had thoroughly consumed two otherwise pleasant summers.

Jim knew his pre-college math background was weak, not so much because he lacked the ability to handle math problems but because he decided too late to take up engineering and had missed those courses so helpful in pre-engineering which were offered in high school. He knew it when he had finished the two-hour general math aptitude exam two days before.

He had barely missed out on a "hardship" scholarship that spring when the family income exceeded the $9000.00 "cut-off" point by $273.00!

Dr. Kruger called the class to order and began, "As you all know, today we divide 163b into sections using the grade of '70' as the 'cut-off' point. Though the passing score is admittedly low, it is felt that with a little extra effort those in the bottom range of passing scores may complete the course successfully and proceed on to the . . . ah . . . more advanced math courses required for an engineering degree. Unfortunately, or fortunately, as the case may be, those below '70' are required to enter a remedial class until they score high enough to re-enter 163b."

He walked importantly to the bulletin board, conscious of the power he was exercising (though it was out of his hands). After much shuffling and groping through the thronged, expectant chaos of freshmen, ooing and ahing, Jim ran his finger down the list of names . . . "Taylor, D. 82; Travis, F. 74; *Turner, J. 69*!" There it was! . . . The magic line—so close! so disappointing! It had to mean dropping out of school after so much hard work, painful "goal setting" . . . everything . . . the bottom of his life fell out! What was so sacred about the number "70"? . . . $9000.00? . . . a 3.5 grade point average? . . .

If Jim Turner's life was so disastrously affected by one point on a test score, imagine how often these imaginary lines *built into our language* influence our attitudes, the process of dividing the "sheep from the goats," the "brights" from the "dummies"! Just what distinguishes "success" from "failure," "right" from "wrong"??????

Just as most of us fail to move with ease among the various levels

of abstractions because we are unaware of them much of the time, so do we also tend to form judgments within a *very limited* "two-value," "either-or," "this-or-that," framework of approval or disapproval.

Once we understand this phenomenon and recognize the semantic "straight jacket" it imposes on us, many of our communication problems will disappear. Perhaps even more important, this realization will help us communicate more effectively by making us examine the "middle ground" or "grey area" so ever-present in all living concerns!

Where it came from—Aristotle again! (*In case you're interested*)

When Aristotle expressed his theories of logic, he began with the premise that "A must be A" and, therefore, "A cannot be B," it had to follow logically that something either had to be "true" or "false," "good" or "bad," *right* or *wrong*! . . . Naturally, logical extension held that there were only *two* sides to any question: that law-breakers were either "guilty" or "not guilty"; that one must be either "for" or "against" something. Any attitudes that fell somewhere between these alternatives were, therefore, ignored. (Curiously, Aristotle in another book encouraged us to live by what he termed the "golden mean"; that is, to adopt a middle ground of behavior between extremes—i.e., between cowardice and foolhardiness lies *courage*, between gluttony and starvation lies moderation in eating, etc.)

Undoubtedly, human societies have made decisions, reached conclusions, established dogmas, etc., under the pressures of emergencies, tribal conflicts, or other necessities of survival that required making decisions hastily. More often, however, they are the result of a failure to use what is known as "extensional" thinking. *Extensional* orientation refers to the consideration of as many sides of a question as possible in order to make a wise judgement.

What we do when we *pre-determine* or *pre-judge* or *direct* our thinking, or make statements that reflect such *pre*viously arrived at

attitudes or *pre*judiced views, is known as intentional orientation! A case in point is the famous (to me) "big-nosed" king of Lichtenstein. He wanted to be the handsomest man in the kingdom; *but* he was hampered (he thought) by his big nose, which was rather common among *his* subjects. He then decreed that all noses that measured more than 1½ inches from lip to end of nose be *cut off*. The result was that most of those operated on died. Many smaller-nosed men not only survived but gave promise of growing longer noses . . . not to mention all the young boys whose noses might become longer than the king's! The king then began to wonder what the queen might think of "small-nosed" men. Should he execute them????? And so it goes. . . .

Decision-making and opinion-forming, therefore, require carefully considered alternatives lest we get into more trouble! This is *maturity*! It is also a most important *keystone* to encouraging sane semantic and communication relationships.

We now deplore the stupidity which promoted religious sects to force "non-believers" to accept *their* beliefs or "lose their heads," political systems that enslaved, executed, or banished those whose ethnic origins, political doctrines, or social attitudes did not conform to the prevailing ones (the ones the heads of government felt were *right*).

Yet we are all guilty of a similarly restrictive or "intentional" turn-off to others every time that we refuse to listen to a speaker who may be a "Republican," a "Socialist," a "Catholic," a "Jew," a "teacher," a "preacher," a "jock," or an "intellectual."

Consider the following two-value judgments:

1. From the New Testament of the *Bible*: Christ says that "those who are not *with* me are *against* me."

2. Ralph Waldo Emerson: "There are *two* laws—those for the *world* and those for *man*, and they are *different*!"

3. Thomas Aquinas (medieval philosopher): "There is a divine law [from God] and a natural law [from man]."

4. Plato (ca. 483 B.C.): "There are two worlds—the one of things or appearances [the false one] and the one of reality or 'essences' [the eternally true]."

5. J. S. Mill, in explaining 19th-century liberalism: "There are two kinds of legislation—the one which provides the 'greatest good for the greatest number of people' and the one that *does not*!" All laws should be *passed* or *rejected* accordingly.

6. The teacher, army officer, or clergyman who tells us there are *two* kinds of behavior—"good" or "bad." The "good" is conducive to order and requires the acceptance of *my* (or our) *rules* and *regulations*; the other *does not* and will *not be tolerated*!

7. Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence (law) adapted from the Romans establishes that a jury render a verdict which is either "guilty" or "not guiity."

8. Marxist-Leninist Communism holds that all human society throughout history consisted of (still does) only *two* classes—the "capitalists" and the "proletariat" (common people)!

9. Math teachers or any others who grade exercises and tests on a basis of the solution of problems as being either "correct" or "incorrect."

Questions to Ask:

1. Can you think of other examples from your own experiences or reading of two-value judgements?

2. After ten years and 135 committee meetings called to consider the building of a new church in a Connecticut congregation recently, the project was dropped. Does this indicate the weaknesses of "dragging out" the consideration of a problem? What other factors may have prompted the congregation to have abandoned the project?

3. Not all situations will allow us the luxury of deliberating over a number of choices. Can you think of any that may lead to disastrous consequences when you wait too long to make up your mind?

4. The distinctions between sexes may be a case wherein one must be either "male" or "female." Can you think of instances in which the line between sexes, either in man, animals, or plants, becomes very "blurred"?

5. In the United States, traditionally there have been two political parties—Republican and Democratic. Is there much evidence that many Americans do not express complete or even partial loyalty to either of these parties? What happens to "third" parties? Why??

6. In the physical world (reality), is there a real line drawn between opposites? Name some.

Follow-Up Projects:

1. Prepare a bulletin board display of various two-value statements or expressions, slogans, options, etc., like "stop or go," "black or white," "in or out," etc.

2. Shakespeare's tragic drama, *Hamlet*, contains a very famous soliloquy that begins "To be or not to be, that is the question. . . ." It has to do with a form of decision-making that has fascinated English-speaking audiences and society every since. Try to determine if Hamlet, in the balance of the passage (Act III, sc. i, lines 56-89), uses *extensional* orientation to arrive at a course of action in considering alternatives, or if he makes a "hasty" decision. Discuss in class how the drama is concluded based on Hamlet's choices.

3. Interview a lawyer and ask him to explain the reasons for insisting on a "guilty" or "not guilty" verdict in criminal cases. How are legal cases handled in other lawsuits related to negligence in such things as accidents or divorces, felonies or misdemeanors.

4. Interview a football player or a coach and ask him why there is so much importance placed on *winning* rather than *losing*. Report to the class his remarks or justification (or those from players involved in the game) on a casette tape or in a written interview to the school newspaper.

5. Make a brief study of the use of "true-false" testing methods used in your school, and ask teachers and some students how they can justify measuring *reality* on this basis from the information learned in class. Feed back to the class.

6. Our society places a great deal of importance on such things as high school diplomas, college degrees, certificates of achievement,

marriage and driver's licenses, bar mitzvahs, and other kinds of initiation rites, letter grades, awards in school, etc., as if some magic line can be drawn between having a competence in some skill or achievement which did not exist before it became *verbalized* on a sheet of paper! What happens when members of society are separated into such slots—the "haves" and "have nots"? Discuss in a short paper the semantic "pitfalls," possible frustrations, ruined careers, etc., that this practice inflicts upon millions of people every day! What alternatives might be used to replace such practices? If possible, set up a "problem-solving" group exercise related to this problem and feed it back to the class.

7. Debate classes in high schools center their topic investigations around a "positive"-"negative" position. Interview the debate coach or squad members and ask them if they feel this procedure *helps* or *hinders* the process of information sharing, or if it generates sufficient interest in debate activities in order to continue the program. Feed back what you gather to the class in an oral or "taped" presentation.

10

EXTENSIONAL AND INTENTIONAL STATEMENTS

Most things one hears, reads, or utters may be classified as being "extensional" (informative) or "intentional" (directive), depending upon the purpose of the one who gives out and/or receives the information.

Obviously, when one is told to "open the book to Chapter 7, read it, and answer the questions at the end," the idea transmitted is "intentional" (directive). Just as *intentional*, however, is a remark that "Too much freedom is bad for children."

This statement is labeled as intentional because there is nothing included in it that would qualify it as anything but an *opinion* of the speaker. If it were announced as an opinion, or based on some evidence that might give the remark a more *valid* or *objective* basis, it might be classified as an extensional statement.

Extensional statements, therefore, require more words and far more effort and thought in forming them. They should also command much more *respect* from the listener.

Scientists usually express themselves this way: "So far as we know, at this point in our experiments, there is a significant indication that we may be on the threshold of a partial or complete cure for the 'common cold.' " Though most people would prefer to hear a shorter and more optimistic announcement, especially about a scientific "breakthrough" of this kind, it is far wiser to surround such a message with cautious and *qualifying* "extensional" expressions.

If a newspaperman, after an interview with this research scientist, were to begin a news story with a lead like "THE COMMON

COLD IS ABOUT TO BE CURED," it would be extremely misleading. It would then become an "intentional" statement.

An effective way of remembering the distinction between the two types of statements may be to (1) think of an *extensional* statement as one through which the speaker *extends* the description of his thought in order to make it more closely resemble reality, and (2) an *intentional* statement omits a great deal and reflects the speaker's "intention" to persuade or coerce another into accepting mostly his *value judgements* without question.

Extensional Devices

Several useful extensional devices are the expressions, "to me," "as far as I know," "evidence suggests," and most important of all, *ETC.* (meaning there is much more to be said about something), the use of quotation marks or the hand gesture indicating a quote, "so far as I can see," "it may be true that," etc.

As we (I) pointed out earlier, it is also well to avoid "allness" statements such as "clearly," "as a matter of fact" (when it isn't), "common sense tells us," and similar, though unverified, verbal "gimmicks" that are meant to fortify one's ideas and opinions.

When authors, speakers, teachers, or anyone, in fact, whose business it is to disseminate information say something, they should be held accountable for the statements they make by using footnotes to indicate where they are getting their information from, or by announcing their ideas as being either gathered from evidence or nothing more than "value judgements" or opinions that may or may not be valid.

The following exercise may help you distinguish between these types of statements so that you may begin to adopt these "helps" in your everyday communication experiences:

Extensional and Intentional Statements

Which of the following statements are "extensional" and which "intentional"? However you label them, reword each in such a way as to reverse the nature of the sentence; circle "E" for extensional, "I" for intentional:

1. Overeating is bad for a person's health. E I
2. Keep off the grass. E I
3. Television has probably affected more people's lives, for better or worse, than any other media form that has come into existence. E I
4. What is good for business is good for the country. E I
5. Most people, if aware of most of the facts and alternatives concerning a problem, will make a wiser decision than those who do not consider these helps. E I
6. All citizens should have a high school diploma. E I
7. Haste makes waste. E I
8. Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains. E I
9. Most advertizing could be removed from our lives for the mutual benefit of all. E I
10. Teenagers are reckless drivers. E I
11. General Semantics is a worthwhile school subject because it attempts to make people more aware of how language affects their lives. E I
12. Everybody knows that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. E I
13. There are more things in heaven and earth than men dream of in their philosophies. E I
14. Knowledge is what happens between the observer and the observed. E I
15. A mastery of algebra will help you solve many livìng problems and will be useful to you thoughout the rest of your life. E I

11

INFERENCE AND FACT

The story is told of a trusting husband who, when he came home from work one evening and found cigar butts in an ash tray, decided that his wife had taken up *cigar smoking*!

It is doubtful if many of us are that *subjective* in the way we form judgments. However, much of the time we draw conclusions based on *inference* rather than fact. Because facts are more difficult to "nail down," often, through carelessness or "sloppy" habits of perception, we rely on hasty judgments based on too causal an observation.

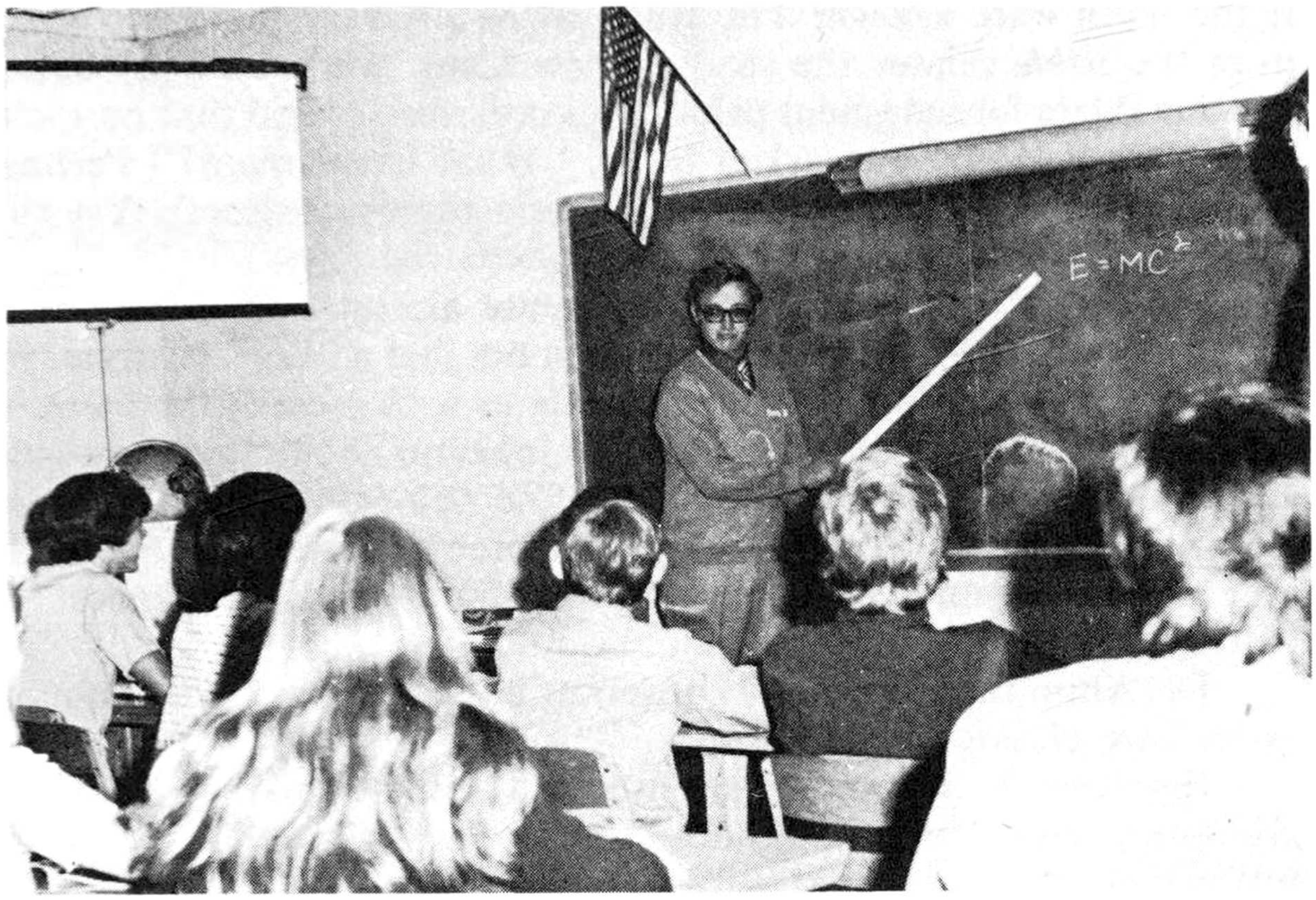
Though few of us will "Sherlock Holmes" our way through life, sifting out clues and weighing carefully all the observable data through long experience like this famous Victorian sleuth, with a little practice we can learn to keep our minds open, to *wait* and *doubt* before we infer something is so or not.

It is just so much easier to guess at things that *appear* to be so or to pre-judge from something we observe, based on prior experience or the habit of abstracting too quickly.

On the following page is the picture of a typical classroom setting. Look at the picture carefully for a few moments. Then select the logical (to you) explanation from the multiple choice statements for each.

When you have finished, check the facts behind the picture in Appendix C. See how closely your judgments match reality, as well as the difference between what appears to be so from what actually is.

It might also be interesting to consider the validity of the questions asked; that is, are they answerable? Is it fair to ask questions to which there is no way of knowing (without scientific tools to measure with) the *facts*?



Circle either the "yes" or the "no" responses to the statements made about the classroom scene above:

1. The is an academic rather than a vocational (shop) type of class. Yes No
2. The instructor is at least 30 years old. Yes No
3. The formula on the board indicates this is probably a science class. Yes No
4. These are junior high (middle school) students. Yes No
5. Girls are usually more attentive than boys in the average class. Yes No
6. This teacher relies more on lectures and books than audiovisual and other involvement activities. Yes No

Turn to Appendix C for the *facts*—check your answers to see how accurate your *inferences* were.

What Is Truth?

If the truth were known! The truth is! . . . A very famous passage from the *Bible* relates the story of how Jesus, when brought before Pontius Pilate for judgment prior to his crucifixion, said that he spoke "the truth," Pilate then asked Jesus, "What is the *truth*?" Perhaps the question is unanswerable (it is surely highly abstract). Yet this question has puzzled mankind throughout the ages.

Modern science has come to dispute almost everything, or at least to question things *relentlessly*. It is not just a "fun" pastime, for the results of a continual *inquiry* provide us with most of the material and spiritual benefits and satisfactions inherent in life here on earth, as well as help eliminate a good deal of pain and misfortune. As Korzybski has said, "False information breeds insanity." One might ask, reasonably enough, "What is insanity?" "And so it goes!"—(Kurt Vonnegut).

Dr. Alton Barbour of the University of Denver has devised a most interesting classroom exercise:

Everyone in class compose three statements that they think are absolutely *true*—beyond a doubt—that are verifiable when investigated—that are, in short, irrefutable!

Hand them in to the teacher, or volunteer them to the rest of the class, or write them on the board. Then have anyone who wishes "fire away" at them, using arguments, challenging data, or offering facts that contradict or *qualify* the statement and render it less than factual or "true." Proceed from one statement to the next as much as you have class time for. Then summarize what you have found out about "the truth."

It is interesting to find out how well you have been prepared to "question," probe, apply critical tools of "logic," reason, scientific inquiry, etc., that you have acquired in other courses so far in your schooling. It is an interesting carry-over device to bring up points for discussion in other classes that may stem from this exercise.

12

THE IS OF IDENTITY

Whatever you say something is, IT IS NOT!

The trouble with "is" is IS!

From the graffiti on this page, notice how so many slogans, statements, or popular sayings are structured on the use of the being verb "is" or other forms of the verb "to be":

"Winning is everything."
"All aspirin are *not* alike."
"A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing."
"Candy's dandy, but liquor's quicker."
"Honesty is the best policy."
"In the beginning was the word."
"There'll always be an England."
"Dogs are man's best friend."
"Silence is Golden."
"A person is innocent until proven guilty."
"An idle mind is the devil's workshop."
"Seeing is believing."

More false information is spread around, and faulty evaluations caused, by the presence of the being verb in English than any other element in the structure of this language. It has become so much a part of our linguistic habits that it is almost impossible to eradicate it. When this linking verb equates something that precedes it with something that follows it that is supposed to be alike or *equal* semantically, it falsifies reality . . . i.e., "*John's* an *idiot*!" "*School's*

a *drag.*" When the verb is used to identify two things, it usually "jams" abstraction levels. If the being verb simply links the subject with a describing word, it is more accurate, i.e., "Bill's car is a *blue Ford,*" "Alice is very *attractive.*" Far less harm is done. Although we can't say *all* about anything, at least we are not misinforming a listener as grossly as we do when we equate unlike things.

Try to become conscious of how often we violate this principle. If we are aware of the problem, it will help us overcome the abuses so common in using the word "is." Very often, if we simply make "extensional" statements out of the original one, it will help clarify and make more *objective* a semantic structure otherwise "false to facts." Make extensional statements of the graffiti at the top of the page.

13

DELAYED RESPONSE

"Those long-haired hippies give me a pain!" "Chemistry is a lousy *drag*!" "You crummy *clod*!" "You will do this because *I tell you to*!" "Indians won't work even if you give them a chance!" "All rich people are selfish!" etc., etc. How often have you heard or made statements like these?

Perhaps of equal importance is how you react or respond to statements like these. Do you ignore them, return them with a reply that is just as simplistic and "over-emotional," which leads to an inconclusive argument, further heated remarks, and a communication block?

It is far better *not to* "turn the other cheek" or leave the prejudiced remark go unchallenged, but to wait a moment or two and frame a reply which helps the other person to overcome his "intentional orientation," expand his awareness of his "false-to-facts" thinking. As Korzybski once said, "Any *fool* can have an opinion!"

The following exercise will help you evaluate statements which usually antagonize a listener whose views, life experiences, and education are broader and more carefully reasoned than the speaker. Effective communication, *information-sharing*, and problem-solving *can be* achieved by waiting until one's temper subsides. A number of things encourage un-sane semantic reactions, however—the love of argumentation, resorting to *logic* (once defined as whatever convinces *you* of the truth of something), the insistence on competition in its many forms—to name only a few. We can succeed, however, with a little effort and help from our friends.

There are several ways to handle this "delayed response"

exercise: Have students formulate two replies—the first one hastily made and the second one more reasoned. Another approach is to take each one and "rap" it around as to its being "false-to-facts" or an "allness statement," etc. It may also be done in groups, with each group taking several remarks and arriving at consensus replies.

Delayed Response Exercise

Suppose someone made the following remarks to you. Prepare a response to each:

1. "You can't change human nature."
   Reply:

2. "It's a sign of weakness to change your mind."
   Reply:

3. "I wonder who is the smartest girl in class?"
   Reply:

4. "That's really an ugly picture!"
   Reply:

5. "I hope no blacks (whites) move in around here."
   Reply:

6. "I'll never be able to divide fractions."
   Reply:

7. "I'm absolutely sure, because I saw it with my own eyes."
   Reply:

8. "You're a stinker and always will be."
   Reply:

9. "That nutty Jane! She actually *likes* the new teacher."
   Reply:

10. "It's not right to wear clothes like that to school."
    Reply:

11. "A college education shouldn't be wasted on girls because they're only going to get married and stay home."
Reply:

12. "Boys shouldn't have to do dishes. That's women's work."
Reply:

13. "Tommy didn't come to school this morning. He must be sick."
Reply:

14. "I know the right way to do it."
Reply:

15. "I'll think about it and make up my mind later."
Reply:

16. "There are two sides to every question."
Reply:

17. "I know what I'm talking about because my father is a judge."
Reply:

18. "Boys are stronger than girls."
Reply:

19. "I absolutely hate social studies."
Reply:

20. "Boys will be boys!"
Reply:

21. "Never trust anyone over thirty."
Reply:

22. "Rock music is for idiots."
Reply:

23. "Anyone who hates kids can't be all bad."
Reply:

24. "Women, generally speaking, are generally speaking."
Reply:

25. "This is a man's world and don't you forget it."
Reply:

26. "The only reason we're in school is to keep us off the streets."
Reply:

Yes—Yep—Sure—That's Right—Of Course—Ya—etc.

Notice how quickly we agree with almost everything anyone says. It's probably because we aren't listening very carefully—or we just like to "get along" with our friends or people we meet for the first time. It may also be an automatic and thoughtless response, like saying "hi!" or talking about the weather or asking how people are—friendly greetings with *very little semantic substance.*

To make us more aware of the dangers in agreeing so readily with remarks or statements made to us, the following game may at this time be started.

Give everyone in class (as a group project) about ten safety pins or cardboard "YES" buttons. Whenever someone else in class is "tricked" into responding with an affirmative reply such as "yes," "yep," "yup," "sure," "that's right," they must give you one of their pins or buttons. Set up a time limit (2 weeks?), and at the end find out who accumulated the most pins or buttons. Include the teacher. There should be enough conversational situations whereby the game can be played successfully. Try to avoid "haggling" over whether a reply is sufficently affirmative or not by setting up rules or types of replies and post them on the board.

It is always interesting to determine who and why certain people accumulated more pins and who lost most or all of them. It's fun and *profitable* semantically, because we will learn to make a more reasoned reply, like "do you really think so?" or "perhaps you're right," or what may be most effective—no reply at all—SILENCE!

Speaking of "silence," it is enlightening to do a class experiment by having everyone maintain complete silence for about 3 minutes. Hide the clock and have the teacher keep time and announce when the time is up. Ask several students how long they thought they were silent, what emotions they felt, if they were uncomfortable, why? What the experiment pointed out about "silence," or the need to talk? Body language?

14

ARGUMENTATION— AGREE-DISAGREE— COMPETITION

One of the most destructive elements in our society is the practice and encouragement of "argument." Argument, as it is discussed here, refers to the tendency to counter another's statements with an opposite viewpoint, generating more and more antagonism on both sides until what should be an "information-sharing" experience becomes rather like a "verbal" tennis match with a net about *60 feet high!*

Notice how arguments seldom settle a dispute, or end up in anything except contempt, mutual hatred, or suspicion. One can become as "psyched up" as a professional football player whose "hate" attitudes take as long to subside after a football game as they take in preparing for one. It is a pity that our society expends so much money and energy in such highly structured confrontations. To promote it in interpersonal, day-to-day conversational situations is a major tragedy.

Recently, more and more people feel that the insistence upon *competition* and the struggles that ensue, the failure attitudes the "losers" are left with, and the combative instincts that competition encourages, can make of our lives a most disagreeable experience.

Perfecting one's individual skills and enlarging our awareness of our environment are wholesome goals, just as keeping physically fit is. But to make an obsession of "getting the better" of the other person is something else, indeed. The following exercises may help make us more aware of how easily most disagreements can be overcome, as

well as point out how thoroughly indoctrinated we all are in our society with competition and its effects.

Agree-Disagree

Some people agree with the following statements; others may disagree. If you agree more than you disagree with a view, circle the "A." If you disagree more than you agree, circle the "D." When you finish making your choice, chose someone to discuss *only* those items you do not agree upon and try to resolve your differences:

A D 1. The student government should be given more control over school and student policies.

A D 2. Sex education *should not* be taught in our public schools.

A D 3. Math courses have little *real* practical value for most students and should be replaced by others more related to life.

A D 4. Premarital sex is harmful for young people and should be discouraged.

A D 5. Most school subjects should be offered on an elective (choice) basis rather than required.

A D 6. The sale or use of marijuana should be determined by law.

A D A nation's security is better served by maintaining a large and well-budgeted military force in order to avoid war.

A D 8. 18-year-olds are mature enough and knowledgeable enough to vote, drink intoxicants, drive cars, and sign legal contracts.

A D 9. Capital punishment should be retained on a very limited basis.

A D 10. The school newspaper should be allowed to print almost anything the staff wishes to without administrative censorship.

A D 11. The United States is too involved in the affairs of other nations and should reduce foreign aid and other commitments.

A D 12. Reading, writing, and arithmetic should continue to be stressed as basic courses in all schools.

A D 13. Men should continue to be in almost complete control of our nation's affairs.

A D 14. Athletics is overstressed in our schools and money used in promoting sports could be used to greater advantage in other areas of school life.

A D 15. Moderate smoking and drinking habits seldom lead to harmful excesses and self-abuse.

A D 16. People who "swear" excessively show their lack of vocabulary and inability to express themselves with more conventional and socially appropriate language.

After you have paired up with someone else and discussed the statements you disagree on, pursue the following conclusions:

1. Find out how many couples disagreed on how many points. Ask why there were so few . . . so many.

2. What factors entered into the differences of views. List them on the board and discuss them.

3. Find out if members of the class were made sad by the fact that the other person disagreed with them. If not, why not?

4. Ask for or volunteer other statements that are more controversial than these and prepare another "agree-disagree" exercise.

5. What part did the language of the statements play in resolving differences of opinion?

Keep in mind that this is a "two-value" judgment type of exercise which violates general semantics principles. It is used here only to help set up a typical argumentative situation. The purpose, of course, is to point out that most differences of opinion can be resolved and, even if they aren't there is no cause for despair, especially in a *free society.*

Dilemmas—Quandaries—Predicaments

Case Histories:

1. Two men have been accused of murdering the same person. Both have been apprehended separately and have not been allowed to communicate with each other since their arrest. Each is told that if he "turns states evidence" and accuses the other of committing the murder, his chances of going free are fairly good. On the other hand, if he pleads "guilty" and avoids a long and costly trial, the sentence may be a very "light" one. What would you do?

2. Mrs. Jones knows her 8-year-old boy enjoys playing ball with his friends and they are outside choosing up teams. She says to him, "I know you'd like to play ball very much with the boys, but your mother loves you very much and enjoys having you near her. Play ball if you wish, but it would be nice if you helped me prepare supper."

3. Senator Flaplip is up for re-election. Many of his constituents are aware of his voting record and much publicity has been given to the passage or defeat of a bill to grant amnesty to those Viet Nam draftees who fled the United States. Being a man of principle and kindly disposition, he personally feels very strongly in favor of the bill's passage. He realizes, however, that if he votes *for* the bill he will antagonize several very powerful organizations, notably the veterans groups, who may not endorse him in the coming campaign. He is, to use a classic expression, "damned if he does, and damned if he doesn't!"

One of the cruelist of life's ironies is having to face alternatives both of which are "rotten." Too often, inbred or socially implanted attitudes lead us to force alternatives on others which are *grossly unfair.* Selfishness and "getting ahead of the other fellow" are probably the most common causes responsible for this type of behavior.

These imposed dilemmas have much to do with language and the semantic reactions to words we use and force on others.

Many interesting games have been devised to point out how attitudes influence the way we interact with others. You may wish to play this game. It is somewhat difficult to grasp even when instructions are read carefully. Therefore it may be wise for the teacher to play the game with a student in front of the class before the others begin. Scoring sheets should be duplicated also, for purposes of playing more than one game, until you see the trend it takes.

The Wagering Game (*From Prisoner's Dilemma*)

1. Divide the class into groups of fours (or as nearly as you can) so you have two pairs playing against each other.

2. One pair will be the "X" team and the other the "Y" team.

3. Pairs or teams will sit with their backs to each other.

4. Each pair (or team) has a supply of scoring sheets, one for each game and a tally kept throughout each game by each team.

Object of the Game: To win as much money as possible from *the bank.*

How to Play. Each team, after scanning the scoring sheet, writes on a slip of paper (hidden from the other team) the word "blue" or the word "green," depending on its preference. They then record their color choice on the scoring sheet under their team letter. Simultaneously, the slips are exchanged when ready. The opposing team performs the same process.

Looking at scoring key on top of page, select the scores that symbolize the *combination* of colors. Thus, if the two color choices exchanged read "Blue-Blue," both X and Y teams get $.10. If they read "Blue-Green," X loses $.25 and Y loses $.25. If they read "Green-Green," then both lose $.10. In the last two columns, record X's cumulative totals and Y's cumulative totals.

On the upper right-hand corner of the scoring sheet are scores for Special Trials 3 and 7. Thus on trials 3 and 7, a blue-green combination will net X a loss of $.25 and Y a gain of $1.00. A green-blue will net X a dollar and Y a loss of a quarter. *Don't forget the special scoring for trials 3 and 7*!

Rules of the Game:

1. Players *must not* consult with the other team, verbally or otherwise. Absolute silence! (Except when indicating their readiness to exchange slips.)

2. Players may not peek at other team's slips before writing their own choice.

3. Play with the assumption that there is *always another game.* Keep on playing until the instructor tells you to stop.

4. Assume that *the bank* will pay off whatever is won.

Players are encouraged to continue playing even though they may be behind. Remember the bank (imaginary) will pay off whatever is won by a team.

(Some confusion may arise if the team does not indicate their initial color choice under their team letter before they exchange their slip of paper with the opponents and then record the color they receive.) Keep on playing and look for patterns that may help both you and your opponent win a maximum amount of money.

When you finish the games, turn to Appendix D and see how it is possible to win lots of money without depriving your opponents of doing the same thing.

On the following page is the scoring sheet that should be duplicated and distributed. You need only several "blue" and "green" slips, as you may pass them back and forth throughout the games.

Wagering Game—Scoring key

SCORING FOR TRIALS 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Color Combination	*Team X*	*Team Y*
Blue - Blue	+.10	+.10
Blue - Green	−.25	+.25
Green - Blue	+.25	−.25
Green - Green	−.10	−.10

SCORING FOR SPECIAL TRIALS 3 and 7

Team X	*Team Y*
−.10	+.10
−.25	+1.00
+1.00	−.25
−.10	−.10

Trial No.	X's Choice	Y's Choice	X's Choice	Y's Choice	X's Cum. Total	Y's Cum. Total
1.						
2.						
Spec. 3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
Spec. 7.						

Follow-Up Projects

1. Have a group try to devise a game in which the winners (conventionally speaking) are the "losers." Try to emphasize the "fun" and envigorating nature of "changing the rules."

2. Have a group experiment in which players lose rather than win. Checkers, pool, poker, or a dice game may serve the purpose for this exercise. Record the progress of the games, the outcome, the emotions, etc.

3. Do a sports story or a T.V. or radio account (on casette tape) of a football or basketball game in which the teams tried to lose as badly as they could (for purposes of getting a better draft pick, or just for no reason at all). How about a "flower-throwing" contest?

4. Write a feature news article about an "unforgetable character" who devoted his whole life to "giving" rather than "getting."

5. Consider the intriguing possibility of reversing the "grading system" and awarding honors to students with most "F's," the "longest hair," "the most pimples," the "poorest attendance record," etc. Set up a mock assembly for awards presentation for honoring such people.

6. With a tape recorder, interview fellow students, faculty members, or coaches, asking them questions about the value of competitive inter-school sports programs, the emotions they feel after their team loses the "big one," etc. Feed it back to the class.

7. Interview students who have consistently failed or who regard

themselves as "losers" to try to find out how they feel about themselves or such sports heroes as Mark Spitz or Hank Aaron.

8. Do a short research paper on the history of competition in Western civilization and compare it with attitudes toward competition in Oriental countries like China and Japan.

9. Discuss the complex role of warfare in history from the standpoint of any direct or lasting beneficial effects that have come from it.

10. Evaluate your school community or the area you live in and prepare a short discussion based on the amount of genuine "giving," sharing, or cooperation that occurs among administration, faculty, student body, or within city governmental agencies. Feed back to class.

11. Prepare a visual (montage, cartoon, photos) presenting the many faces of pain, struggle, violent physical contact, maiming, bullying, distrust, opposition, etc., that the media portrays in newspapers or magazines.

12. Prepare a justification for competition or reasons why it has achieved such a prominent position in our society.

13. Prepare as many questions as you can about argumentation, disagreement, competition, etc., and submit them to the class for discussion.

14. Interview the debate coach or members of the debate team if you have one and ask them just what purpose this activity serves so far as knowledge-gathering, skill-building, or other humanitarian benefits

are concerned. Inquire why subjects are researched and presented in a "pro and con" (for-and-against) fashion.

15. Examine a typical sports page in the newspaper and record the various expressions used to describe how one team or player defeats another. Put them on the bulletin board or on a cassette tape.

16. Check a section of a biographical dictionary or a list of eminent English persons buried at Westminster Abbey to see how many of them achieved prominence through destructive careers (military) compared to those known as humanitarians. Feed back to class.

15

GAMES STUDENTS PLAY

Though we all detest deception, hypocrisy, "double-standards," trickery, etc., in adults, we usually overlook the same kind of behavior in ourselves.

Many of you have heard of Dr. Berne's famous best-seller of several years ago, *Games People Play.* It contains an interesting, highly readable account of the various ways by which people take advantage of each oather, manipulate their own and each other's affairs in such a way that they win "imaginary" points—as if the game of life were played and recorded on a score board or a "won and lost" tally sheet.

Likewise, you may be familiar with the "games students play" in the classroom or elsewhere in school or at home. It has been said that if "as much skill were applied to doing class assignments as is expended on *getting out of work, thinking up excuses,* screwing up a class, and 'bugging' the teacher, 95% of our high school graduates would be valedictorians!"

A recent study has indicated that most classroom disruptions, lost time, etc., have been eliminated by simply verbalizing the strategies, making everyone aware of them.

To bring into the open these devious (but often very funny) techniques, the following exercise is suggested:

1. Divide into groups, and each group prepare a list of game tricks either they or someone they know has successfully used to "win" a concession, a grade, time, a favor, a cookie, etc., by cleverly deceiving the teacher or other adult. (Keep it anonymous—no names.)

2. Collect the lists and have another group work by themselves to compile the most common devices while the others continue to invent more.

3. Divide these into ones used in the classroom, school office, at home, or elsewhere. Indicate the possible degree of success likely to follow; who they may work on.

4. Return the sorted out items to the other groups and prepare to:

5. Feed back to the class in the form of visuals, oral reports, or role-playing skits. Have the best ones play-acted by each group it originated from.

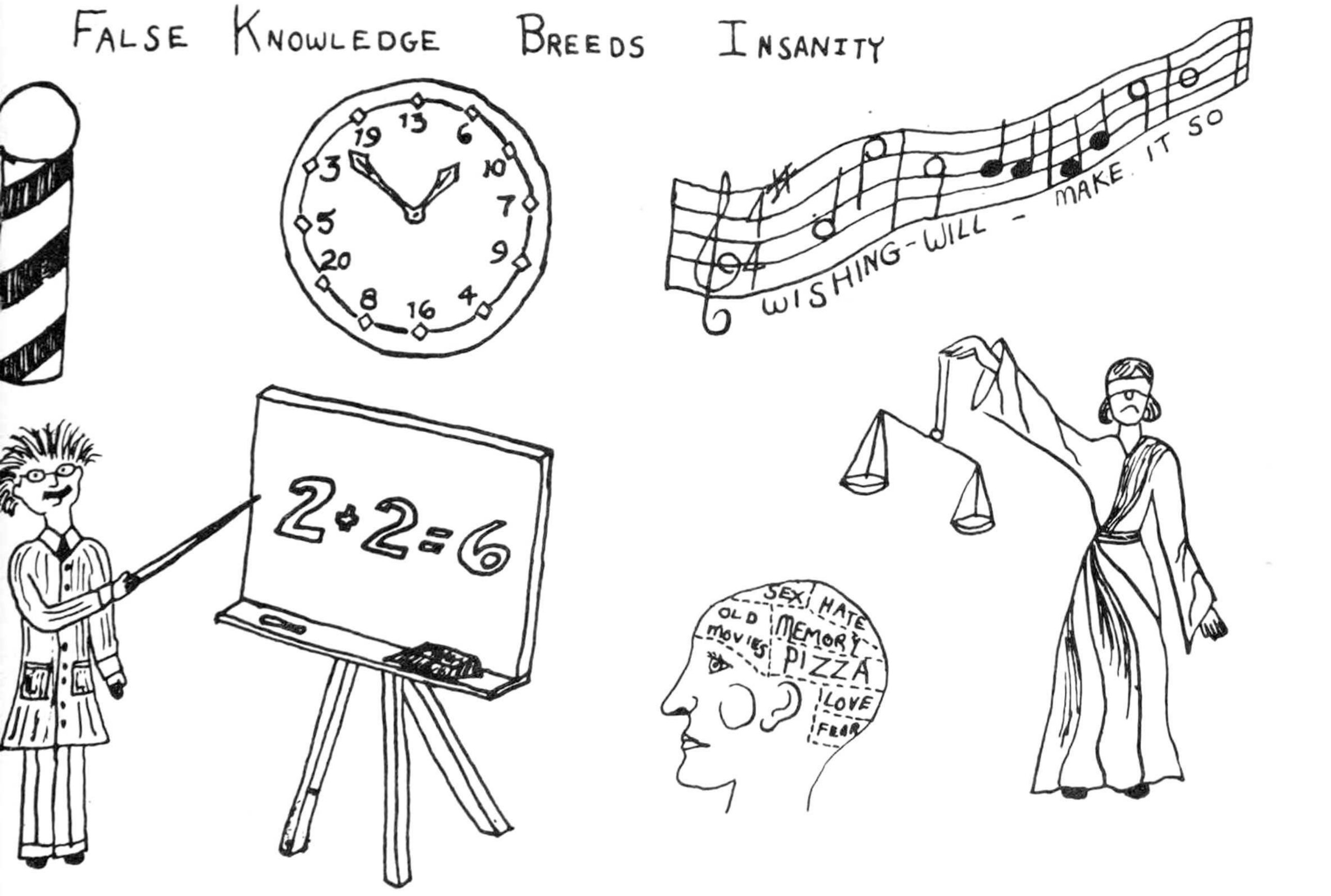
6. General class discussion of how this activity helped everyone recognize the reasons behind the games and how they affect people in our society or why they are used in the first place.

As a follow-up, use examples from recent events such as Watergate or any other deceptive situation wherein the facts came out in the end and the attempt to hide or deceive didn't work out. What were some of the expressions used by participants that describe methods of withholding or "covering up" activities.

Discuss the whole background of "public relations," "Madison Avenue" techniques of deceiving people . . . advertising gimmicks . . . subtleties . . . "on" and "off" the record statements . . . political strategies that give false impressions . . . etc.

16

MASTER SYMBOLS— THE CULTURAL LAG— ADVERTISING



The Humanities and the Sciences

The humanities refer to those academic school subjects having to do with human society and/or behavior, such as history, sociology, literature, philosophy, etc., as different from the "sciences." Science

courses are usually expressed by precise mathematical descriptions and through the use of what is known as "empirical" methods—arriving at the validity of an assumption by experimentation or the proofs of experience. You may be familiar with several high school science courses such as biology, physics, chemistry, and algebra, and, perhaps, more recently *linguistics*, the science of language.

Since we are said to live in a so-called scientific age, those educators in the area of the sciences usually (though they seldom admit it) regard the "humanists" as impractical "dabblers" in knowledge—using inference and unverifiable value judgments to construct their courses upon. Likewise, the "humanists" view the "sciences" as cold and heartless, forever involved in experimentation and calculation without regard for the effects their discoveries and researches have for mankind. It is, therefore, quite easy for the "humanists" to identify the terrible destructiveness of modern war implements (especially the hydrogen bomb and missiles) with the "aloof" and impersonal attitude of the scientists who devised them.

Since most political systems and our economic way of life are usually structured on or are an outgrowth of humanistic studies, the world of science may rightly point to the "mess" the humanists have made of attempting to construct social organizations, the various "isms" that came out of the 19th century and their consequent tyrannies—the abominations of the Nazi gas chamber and the dehumanization of Communist conformity.

However one feels about the matter, about all that can accurately be said in favor of either is that science at least attempts to keep "up to date." Scientists rarely ever claim to have had the "last word" about anything. They are remarkably *open minded* and employ extensional orientation when attempting to arrive at some conclusion or other. The "conclusion" is then held to be a *theory only*, since so much that has been felt to be true in the past is replaced by further discoveries and experiments.

Outmoded Concepts and the Cultural Lag

This part of the G.S. course will have to do with symbols, statements, principles, maxims, cultural phenomena, etc., that at one time or another were perhaps useful in pulling society together from its primitive disorganization. Such things as the cat, a nature symbol, a geometric figure, or several words that were felt to have a magical quality about them have at one time or another captured the attention

and allegiance of millions of people, or have been regarded as objects of worship. Having then served their purpose (for that time), many of them have been discarded, or in a later age were found to be unworthy of attention. Many have remained with us, wrapped in an attractive "semantic package" and paraded around by certain "lovers of the past" or "seekers of permanence," magicians or mystics, not to mention a number of highly regarded philosophers and scientists who have inherited their attitude and its symbols and are reluctant to part with them or the "power" it gives them over their fellow man.

These "master symbols," or as Mr. Hayakawa calls them, "first principles," may appear in some archaic or compelling passage from imaginative literature, a philosophical treatise, mystical utterance, scientific paper, or religious dogma or doctrine.

It seems also to be part of their attitude (the Master Symbolists) that these symbols are adequate to explain and solve *all* of our problems, whenever or however they might arise. They also feel it is necessary that *all men* are brought to agree upon them, as well as *leave them unquestioned*! They then become sanctified, magical "cure-alls" for most of the woes that beset our modern, complex society. They must be passed down from generation to generation, resistant to change and protected from challenge, either by experiment or measurement. (The foregoing is a wordy and rather abstract attempt to clarify the role that symbols play in gathering and spreading knowledge and the branches of study used to hand them down from generation to generation.)

High school students might examine most of the courses offered in our schools and colleges and evaluate them in the light of their social significance, practicality, interest, etc., but the most valid criterion (measuring tool) for purposes of general semantics would be made from the standpoint of how thoroughly dominated they are by "master symbols" that have allowed the content of the course to "lag" behind others in the curriculum.

Many of the "humanities" have attempted (within the twentieth century) to become as accurate as the sciences, i.e., "sociology"—the *science* of society; "psychology"—the *science* of the mind, etc., with limited success. It has also become another form of master symbol in attaching the suffix "-ology" to any inquiry or study which it is felt may make of it a valid "science," i.e., "cosmetology," "sexology," etc. It is a great American pastime to transform rather slight, insignificant pastimes or jobs into important sounding "sciences" by simply attaching a combination of letters to a word, as if by saying something is so will automatically "make it *so.*"

Some curious "pseudo-sciences" from the past are *astrology*—the study of how the stars and planets affect human life; *phrenology*—the study of how the shape of the head determines intelligence, etc.; and *alchemy*—the science (?) of discovering how various chemical elements may be combined to produce "gold," or "extracting sunbeams from cucumbers" (from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*). Astrology is still "going strong," and from alchemy has come what we know today as chemistry.

Though we may laugh at these (to us) hoaxes from the vantage point or "glorious hindsight" of twentieth-century knowledge, they were at one time held to be authentic and fruitful intellectual pursuits.

Tracing and studying the appearance and effect of these studies from the past is interesting and enlightening—not so much for laughs, but for other, more constructive purposes of realizing how arduous and wonderful the pursuit of knowledge has been through the ages and *will continue to be.* Most thoughtful people feel that there is no more satisfying human activity than the learning process, if only because you can *never get enough of it* (as you often do with other, less permanent gratifications of the body).

Similarly, the joys of creativity are unlike any other personal involvement. Too bad learning in school is often made to be so dull and dreary and that creativity is discouraged by the "cultural lag" in our school's curricula. Perhaps if courses and methods were submitted to a rigorous examination from time to time, and "empirical" methods were applied, the classroom would more often be a place one would look forward to entering rather than a modified "detention room" where one must bide his time before being allowed to re-enter the "real world" of living involvements.

Let us look into some of the possible reasons for the failure of society to keep pace with change, and face and solve problems more effectively, and what role general semantics may play in it.

Here are some questions centered around master symbols from the past that were believed in at one time or another in Western society and discarded or retained depending upon cultural advances or the ability of the symbol holders to manipulate others and keep power over them:

1. Why might the "circle" or "right triangle" be considered the *perfect* geometric figure to which a number of magical powers might be ascribed? How is a circle defined?

2. Can you think of any visual figures or symbols that play an important part in social, religious, fraternal, or political organizations in our time?

3. What significance has the number "three" or "seven" or "thirteen" held in the past or at the present time?

4. How do advertisers use symbols or slogans that help sell their products? What are some of them?

5. Some primitive societies felt that "all of life and all living matter are derived from '*fire*'." Why might they have believed this?

6. What other subjects of nature, icons, ornaments, animals, or artifacts have been worshipped in the past?

7. What kind of "hassles" have occurred in recent years over the United States flag? Discuss them.

8. How can you explain the fascination that fortune-tellers, tarot cards, astrology, Ouija boards, and E.S.P. (extra-sensory perception) hold for many people today?

9. What unusual influence has the *moon* had over man in the past (until the recent moon landings)?

Closely bound up with the "cultural lag" is the failure of social institutions to keep up with the swift change of recent scientific discoveries and experiments. The term "epistomology" is used to refer to *knowledge gathering* and the study of *knowledge.* It has been said that our school systems lag behind other social organizations by about twenty years. In this respect, only the armed forces are further behind in the way they treat and handle their personnel, even though their weapons are up to date (until very recently).

10. Can you think of any school subjects that may have fallen behind the times in the content or methods of learning the "subject matter." Base your response, not so much upon the difficulty or dullness *to you*, as on the course objectives, goals, or practicality that the instructor may have presented when the course began.

11. How might a lack of "up-to-date" *epistomology* result in many young people "dropping out" of classes or school altogether?

12. Can you think of any non verbal symbols or gestures that are used to bind together or identify social groups like racial or religious minorities in our society? Do you think they help or hinder the process of enabling people to get along more agreeably?

Follow-Up Projects

1. Prepare visuals (cartoons, collages, groupings of symbols, insignias, flags, advertising slogans, etc.) for the bulletin board.

2. If you are familiar with seances, astrology, tarot cards, or E.S.P., prepare a short paper or class presentation explaining the power they have over those who believe in or practice their use.

3. Relate in some form or other the various symbolic devices used by the Nazis and Hitler to consolidate power in Germany during the 30's and 40's of this century. (See William S. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.*)

4. Prepare a short paper or oral discussion of various objects of worship down through the ages.

5. Read Shirley Jackson's frightening short story "The Lottery," and report how it depicts the "cultural lag" at its worst in the way people continue to respond to tradition that is most destructive without questioning its meaning or origins.

6. Put together a poster of the many symbols used by T.V. networks, professional football organizations, industrial companies, etc., to show how easily people identify with them.

7. General semanticists *do not condemn* signs or symbols. They simply encourage people to use them as "information bearers" rather than as objects that encourage irrational behavior or mass delusions. Prepare a list or visual of symbols that help people quickly identify something or gather information from them for their use in solving problems or helping them get somewhere.

8. Prepare a role skit of a very solemn ceremony that conveys a *maximum* of occult, mystical, or spiritual significance and a *minimum* of enlightenment or "information-sharing," such as certain religious or civil ceremonies, the "swearing-in" of political figures or witnesses in a court room, initiation ceremonies, etc. Evaluate them for social significance or usefulness or lack of it in your presentation.

9. Consider the wide use of "marching bands," "parade music," etc., in our school and civic ceremonies, often to the exclusion of other types of music that more people might enjoy. Prepare a study of this curious phenomenon and its historical development, its relationship to "master symbols," etc. Interview your school's band director or band members, cheerleaders, and other students to get their justification of the value of these things as a part of school or community life. Discuss it in class.

10. From a familiarity with "rock" music, investigate the various symbolic appeals it has to young people which occur in song lyrics, costumes, etc. Relate it to possible social or anti-social effects these things may have on other segments of society.

17

SONGS 'N WORDS

Popular songs and the words that music is set to probably have a much greater effect on people's lives and attitudes than most sociologists and historians realize. Mr. Hayakawa feels that several generations of Americans who grew up and lived during the 20's, 30's, and 40's of this century were seriously affected by the fantasy and delusional song lyrics then highly popular. Perhaps as fitting an example is the song "Blue Room" which told of how easily all of life's problems are instantly solved by marriage:

We'll have a Blue Room
A new room for two room,
Where everyday's a holiday
Because you're married to me.
Not just a tall room,
A hall room, a ball room,
Where I can smoke my pipe away
With your sweet head upon my knee.
We will thrive on, *Keep alive on*
Nothing but kisses,
As mister and missus
How happy we'll be!
You'll sew your trouseau
I'll be Robinson Crusoe
We'll be so far from earthly cares
In our blue room above the stairs.*

*"Blue Room" by Lorenz Hart and Richard Rogers. Copyright, 1926 by Harms, Inc. Used by permission of Warner Bros. Music

Rock lyrics of the 60's and 70's seem to reflect the semantics of reality far more closely than did the songs of an earlier era. Though some rock composers are puzzled by what their songs are supposed to express, the dominating themes have been a combination of disillusionment with the "establishment" and the need for people to care about each other more, get and spend less, and enjoy life as it presents itself for everyone. The tone of the song lyrics of rock and even country-western seem more direct and atuned to actual living problems than the love ballads associated with Hollywoodized fantasy and illusion that held the stage in the first half-century.

Just how much attention is paid to the language of music has never been adequately determined. Perhaps the s.r. we get from music is mostly detached from verbal messages. The harmonics that appeal to us have more of an *associative* quality, which probably attaches a song to some pleasant recollection or fondly held memory of the past.

An interesting song to analyze for content meaning is "The Good Life."* It tries or seems to express an optimistic view toward human existence:

It's a good life
Full of fun . . . seems to
Be the IDEAL. . .
It's a good life
Lets you hide all
The sorrow you feel. . .
You won't really fall in love
For you can't take a chance.
So please be honest with yourself
And don't fake romance.
It's a good life, to be free,
To explore the unknown.
It's a good life
To express all the love you have shown.
So just remember I still love you,
And in case you wonder why,
Well, just wake up,
Kiss the good life *Goodbye!**

Though the song has a pleasant, positive and restful harmonic quality, the verbal message, when we attempt to analyze it, is exceedingly "muddy" and self-contradictory. The final verse is

*Paris Music Co., Inc., music by Sacha Distel; lyrics by Jack Reardon, © 1963

especially ambiguous. If the object of one's affections has to "wonder why" he (she) is loved, then that person will have to "kiss the good life goodby." Strange, indeed, But, then, most song lyrics defy rational analysis, and very likely that is why they appeal to us. Most attempts to intellectualize anything result in "draining" the fun of it. That is why a work of literature can be made into a lifeless "chore" by over-analysis.

Very likely, most song lyrics are composed as compromises to fit musical notes and definite metric patterns with a minimum of attention being paid to "logic," reason, or *semantic reality*. To paraphrase the late, great Fred Allen, perhaps most music is nothing more than "chewing gum for the ears."

From the mid-fifties to the present, much of the cultural shock we have experienced from student and minority protest demonstrations, alienation, etc., has been accompanied by or associated with "rock" music of one form or another. An enjoyable activity in semantic sleuthing and awareness may stem from the following projects:

1. Get recordings and duplicate the words (or lyrics) for songs from several eras of the past—the "Gay Nineties," the "Roaring Twenties," etc., and play samplings in class. Try to get the words to the songs and duplicate them for class members to read as they listen. Point out how they might reflect the attitudes current during that time (interview people who lived then for help); also interesting may be how these songs might have an appeal to "nostalgia." Such elements as "naivete" or lack of sophistication, contempt for an older generation, etc., may be brought out also. School music departments may help, too.

2. Prepare and present recorded examples of several vastly different types of music intended to convey highly dramatic or serious messages, i.e., grand opera, "light" musical comedy, poetic youth songs of Bob Dylan, "hard" rock, etc.

3. Gather a group of virtually meaningless national "craze" songs from the past or present such as "Three Little Fishes," "Mairzy Dotes" (Mares eat oats?), "You Ain't Nothin' But a Houndog," etc. Analyze the appeal they had based on the time they were popular.

4. Since most serious and popular music is based on the love

theme, compose song lyrics (and set to music if possible) or play music that has a "hate" theme, or some other "motif" considered antithetical to "love." Seek out some propaganda war songs composed to arouse hate for an enemy from World Wars I and II.

5. Collect and arrange to play several selections known as instrumentals (no words), and have the class compose short written accounts that these songs brought to mind or the associations that the melody created in the mind. Collect and read some back to the class. It may be interesting to discuss whether or not "thought" is possible without language, or how soon a mental image is translated into words, within our heads.

6. Prepare any other type of project related to the semantics of music you think might be of interest to the class or point up how differently people react to music. With a tape recorder you might play an old "melodic" song; a "jangling" rock number to people of different age groups and record their impressions on tape and play back to the class.

Follow-Up Group Projects

Set up small or large groups to discuss the following:

1. Why does music play such a large role in the lives of some people and so little in others? What might be referred to as a "tin ear"?

2. Are words to songs as important as the melody itself? Why or why not?

3. Name and discuss why some vocalists are far more popular and successful than others—what factors related to "clarity" or distinctness of expression, projection of emotions, etc., enter into the particular appeal of singers or musicians.

4. The names of particular musical groups are interesting to collect from advertisements, T.V. ads, etc., of old-time, country, or rock groups. Ask rock groups or others why they named themselves as they did. Research or try to figure out why so many musical organizations

adopted such "bizarre" or unlikely names as "Lead Zeppelin," "Chicago," "The Bank," etc.

5. Set up a group goal related to music and words, or whatever you would like to report back to the class on.

Review—Reinforce—Evaluate

Now may be the time to pause and try to determine what you have become aware of by a general review of the units or pinciples of general semantics covered so far in this course. The teacher may want to prepare a "feedback" sheet or inventory of how effective the various units and procedures have been. It is also helpful to have a general class "recall" of the various items, ideas, principles, awarenesses, illustrations, etc., that members of the class can volunteer and have listed on the board.

For a generally effective method of bringing out responses and new-found attitudes related to language and how it affects us, the following group exercise might be used.

Divide the class into groups of four or five and give each group a set of the following questions. Appoint a "group leader" and, with the help of others, rate the questions on a basis of 1 to 10 (1—weak or unanswerable to 10—interesting and worthwhile). Then try to arrive at a concensus answer for each. On the basis of the point scale, feed back the best questions and responses to the class if time permits.

Group 1

1. What do you feel the effect would be if general semantics principles were suddenly applied to all social situations everywhere in the world (assuming it would be possible)?

2. What are your feelings on competitive sports and the emphasis on "school spirit," "pep assemblies," etc., in our schools? Do you feel these activities and attitudes are "destructive" or "beneficial" to school life?

3. If given a chance to study general semantics further, would you? Why or why not?

4. Would one universal language help solve many communication problems? How? Why or why not?

5. If most statements people make were clear and informative in the first place, would as much "feedback" be needed? How could this desirable objective be reached?

6. In what way could you use general semantics principles to improve family relationships, or relations with boy or girl friends, teachers, others??

Group 2

1. What are some forms of nonverbal communication?

2. Do you think a better understanding of "body language" could help people better understand each other? How?

3. How can the value of "silence," "delayed response," and "doing" rather than "talking about" something be *practically* applied? Specify.

4. If people involved in "politics" were to exercise G.S. principles, what do you suppose would happen to the political situation today? Would problems confronting us be solved more effectively? How might it affect presidential or other elections, etc.?

5. How can "goal setting" be important in achieving "problem solving"? Specify.

6. What do you think of the traditional "two-party" system used in our so-called democratic society when we consider the points made about "two-value" judgments.

7. How do the attitudes and principles expressed in this course affect you in your other classes? Relate examples.

Group 3

1. Do you feel group activities help or hinder the learning and information-sharing process in class? Give advantages or disadvantages of group activities.
2. Does your teacher become over-involved with his or her discussions and tend to wander from the subject? Do these disgressions bother you? Why or why not?

3. How can abstractions or the confusion of abstraction levels cause many severe difficulties in everyday life? Specify.

4. Can you communicate with others better now that you know what general semantics is about? What handicaps still remain to get in the way of communicating with others effectively? Specify.

5. How is it possible to transfer ideas to others without the use of verbal symbols or words? List the ways.

6. If words are just symbols for the "real thing," how come people react to words the way they do?

7. Why should *nobody* be asked a question he can't answer?

Group 4

1. What kinds of field trips might be arranged that would be interesting to witness as a communication experience?

2. Refute the statement, "Seeing is believing."

3. Why is it so difficult for many people to get a new idea to become a permanent part of their orientation or attitude toward life and things? List the various reasons.

4. Why might a local judge be regarded as too "liberal" by some and much too "strict" or conservative by others in handling such things as misdemeanors, felonies, etc., involving "young people"?

5. Recall and list statements you have heard from teachers or administrators that reflect anti-social, "intentional," or socially "destructive" attitudes or orientations. Rephrase them so that they might be more acceptable to you.

Group 5

This group should formulate questions related to general semantics and communication that might be interesting to find answers to. Relate back to class for discussion and evaluation.

This concludes the coverage of the major principles of this general semantics course. Though it only skims the surface, it may serve as a substantial basis for the next unit—"Problem-Solving." Like the first exercise, "Decision-Making," it has to do with predicaments, experiences faced every day.

If covered carefully, seriously, and with a firm resolution to "get results," it may prove to be a "boon" to you and your school community.

In the Appendix are several other alternate exercises and suggestions that may interest you and be worth working on.

18

PROBLEM-SOLVING

If a Martian or any other intelligent visitor were to examine the traditional curriculum of our elementary and secondary schools, he would probably conclude that all *we think* we need to get through life successfully is a reasonable mastery of several "basic skills": reading, writing, and arithmetic—as if, when we come to any of life's problems, such as what to do when we want something we can't afford, we simply take out our slide rule or remember and apply the multiplication tables and everything is solved! Beyond that, most courses attempt to make us familiar with how to use certain machines, read various works of literature, learn about our nation's history (mostly political and military), appreciate how certain young people kick footballs, and mostly the "rightness" of emulating and copying how adult society conducts their "getting" and "spending" behavior.

Since religion, philosophy, morals, and ethics, in short, how to behave and live satisfactorily, is virtually eliminated from most curricula, the least we can do is attempt to develop an activity and become involved in what is perhaps the most practical human concern of all—how to solve problems—*living problems*!

Psychologists and philosophers generally agree that most behavior is motivated by a rather selfish desire to *make things better*. At first, the advantages seem to be limited to the one who promotes them. In most cases, however, they benefit everyone.

Genuine achievement and human progress almost always come about because someone doesn't like the way things are. When Isaac Newton had an apple fall on his head, we are told he didn't chop the

tree down but went on to find out just why objects tend to fall toward the center of the earth and at what velocity, so that the measuring formula might help mankind solve problems related to falling objects.

When Martin Luther King wearied of having his fellow blacks treated as less than American citizens, he did something about it and all the world (probably) knows the result.

If something needs changing or improving, why not find out if and how it can be done? Let us begin with this simple exercise. Make a list of statements following the phrase:

"Wouldn't it be nice if. . . ."

Write down the wishes you have now—anything you think would make life more liveable, reduce tensions, ill-feelings, in short, whatever would make you happier in the long run. Collect the lists. Some will be rather silly, others quite serious and common to many people. A number of them will have to do with large societal problems, political situations, but many more will bear upon school problems, parental "hang-ups," the desire for more freedom from restraints, and "other-directedness."

Put a tentative list on the board, have the class form groups and volunteer to take a problem they commonly would like to work on. You may need several class periods to discuss the problem, its possible solution, or whatever needs doing to get the problem solved—what obstructions need removing, research, interviews, or other investigative activities. Then feed back to the class. A recorder or group leader should formulate the problem and its complexities. In a large group "circle," get reactions to the group presentation.

Some groups may want to abandon their problem and work on another one that is more likely to be solved. It is always more exciting to work toward some objective that is likely to result in positive action rather than more *talk* or the typical "turn-off" that requests or recommendations meet with when handed in to the people who "run things." If one keeps in mind that if it is a reasonable request, based on considerable research, surveys, or serious investigation, and expressed in a clear, "tasteful" package, most responsible persons in positions of authority will pay attention to it. It is especially effective if submitted or backed by an instructor.

Without the assurance that something may come of it through publicity or direct referral to those who can handle the problem, very little enthusiasm can be generated. Too often, worthwhile causes or problems that need solving end up in wastebaskets or dissolve when a

bell rings or a school term ends. See to it that this doesn't happen. Nothing is more annoying than being involved in "busy work" for its own sake.

A "problem-solving" activity done several years ago by high schoolers accomplished a number of improvements in their school community. It came after the faculty successfully "opened" the campus, using general semantics tools. The paper was submitted to the high school principal, the superintendent of schools, and the school board, as well as other interested members of the community. About five of the nine proposals were adopted the following year, and the paper was used by the Wisconsin Education Association as a workship topic and elsewhere as a model of student cooperation and interest in real "problem-solving."

The thing to do is get started and remain optimistic until you get your recommendations in clear, direct, written form. There is no need for wishing "luck," since most of this ingredient is simply persistence "squared."

19

GENERAL SEMANTICS AND THE MASS MEDIA

Much criticism has been directed at our news media sources in recent years, especially at television, for oversimplifying, distorting, and selecting items for nationwide broadcasting that reflect the bias of news-gathering and network managers!

The following outline and mental models represent what several general semanticists feel is the basic cause for much distortion and false-to-facts orientations which are built into the very structure of our electronic media.

Critics of T.V. accuse it of performing a "secret teacher" role in our society by the "covert" (hidden) process of selecting what they alone wish to send into millions of homes every day. Newspaper coverage of daily events is, naturally, much more complete. However, surveys indicate that most people get their "news" from television since news reading is declining, as well as the number of two-newspaper cities and the number of newspapers printed each year.

Consider the following explanations and choose one of the follow-up projects to verify the accuracy of this general semantics theory:

1. Watch or have a network or local T.V. news program video-taped. List the various news items covered. Check the news pages of a daily paper that appeared on the same day. With a "Magic Marker," circle the news items the T.V. program covered compared to the rest of the "news" covered in the newspaper. Display on the bulletin board or prepare a graph to demonstrate the difference.

2. From a half-hour telecast of network news, keep track of the time alloted for commercials and determine what kind of audience they are directed to.

3. From a daily newspaper, compute how many column-inches are devoted to advertising compared to news items. Prepare a graph (circle or bar) showing percentages related to news, sports, entertainment, comics, etc.

4. Using the inexact but often used terms "good" or "bad" news, circle news items on a newspage with a red "Magic Marker" that might be considered "bad" (pessimistic) events and a blue one for "good" (optimistic) news reports. As a group project, compose a paper with news stories that are all good (positive and optimistic accounts, such as "1234 people all reached work or school today without any deaths"). Would such items of news really interest readers???

5. Evaluate newspapers or T.V. advertising and determine to what extent it is information—distorted, dishonest, etc.

6. As a group project, try to determine the biases or prejudices of the editor or manager of a newspaper or T.V. station network, or if there seems to be a reasonable degree of "fairness" or impartionality in news coverage or general programing arrangements.

7. Marshall McLuhan, the communications and media expert, claims that it takes a lot of "good news" (advertising) to support the "bad news" (most news items on the front page). Call a local newspaper office and ask what percentage (approximately) of the cost of the newspaper is paid by advertising and how much is supported by subscriptions and sales of the paper. Then try to find out how much the paper would cost if advertising were removed as a source of income. Feed back to the class.

8. Prepare several commercials, either for T.V., radio, cassette recorders, video-tape or newspaper ads that avoid distortion, the use of superlatives (the "best," the "cheapest," etc.) and that represent as accurately as possible what chief advantages or *exact values* are offered by a

business or manufacturing concern or product. It can be done. Discuss the project.

1. Technical problems of converting data (Facts) to information by the "media" which abstracts (selects) it and. . . .

2. Physical limitations of humans in processing this distorted information . . . and . . .

3. Further problems resulting from audiences becoming overloaded with so much trivia and/or distorted information that they can not sort out what they see, hear, or read well enough to make proper value judgements or evaluate adequately day-to-day happenings in order to structure their own living processes . . .

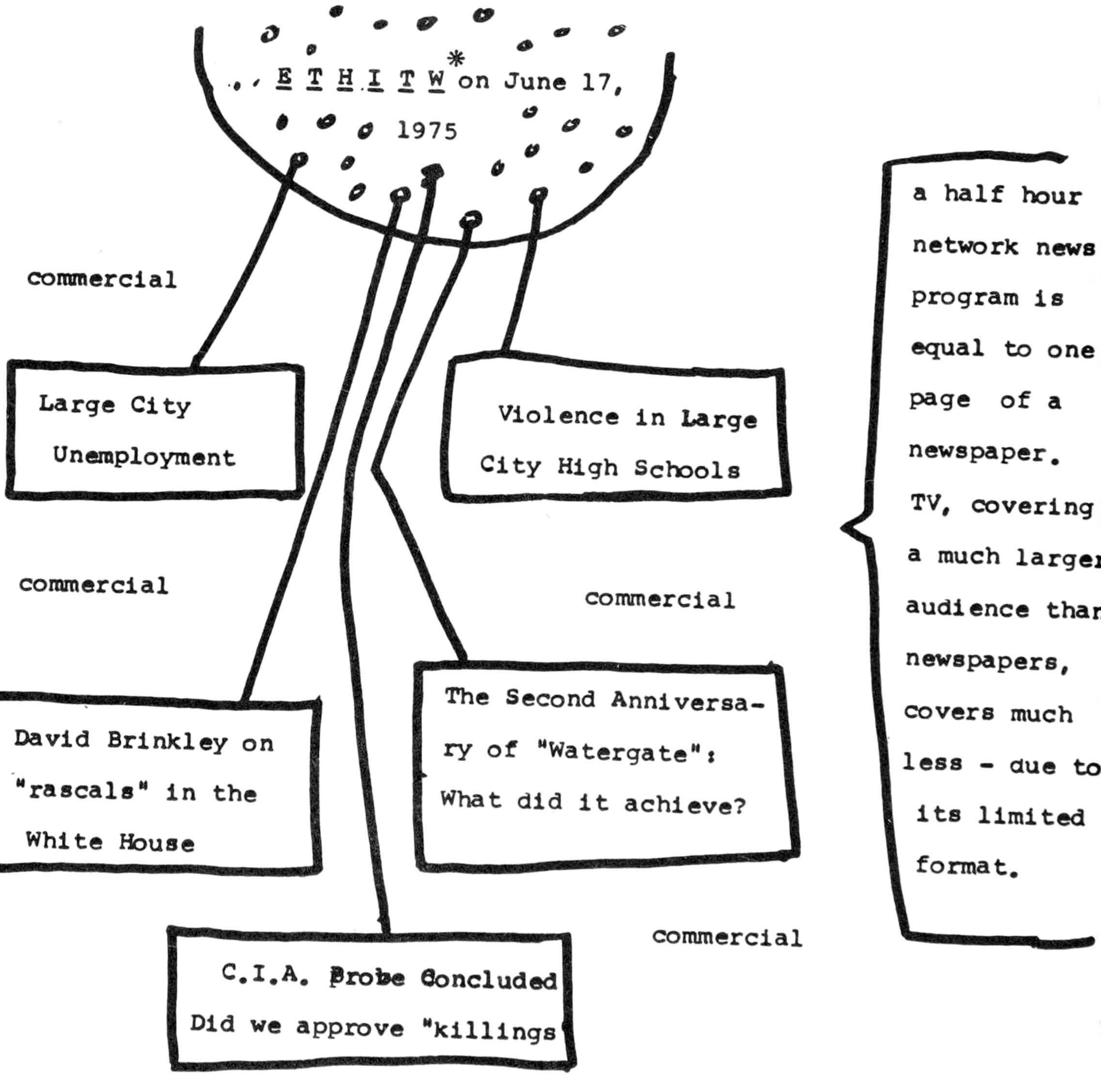
4. Finally, the one-way nature of the television medium prohibits two-way communication or, ideally, information sharing.

QUESTIONS:

1. Of the three media forms, newsprint, radio and TV, which provides the maximum of information? How?

2. How might the problems of distortion, selectivity, or the passivity of listeners, readers or viewers be remedied?

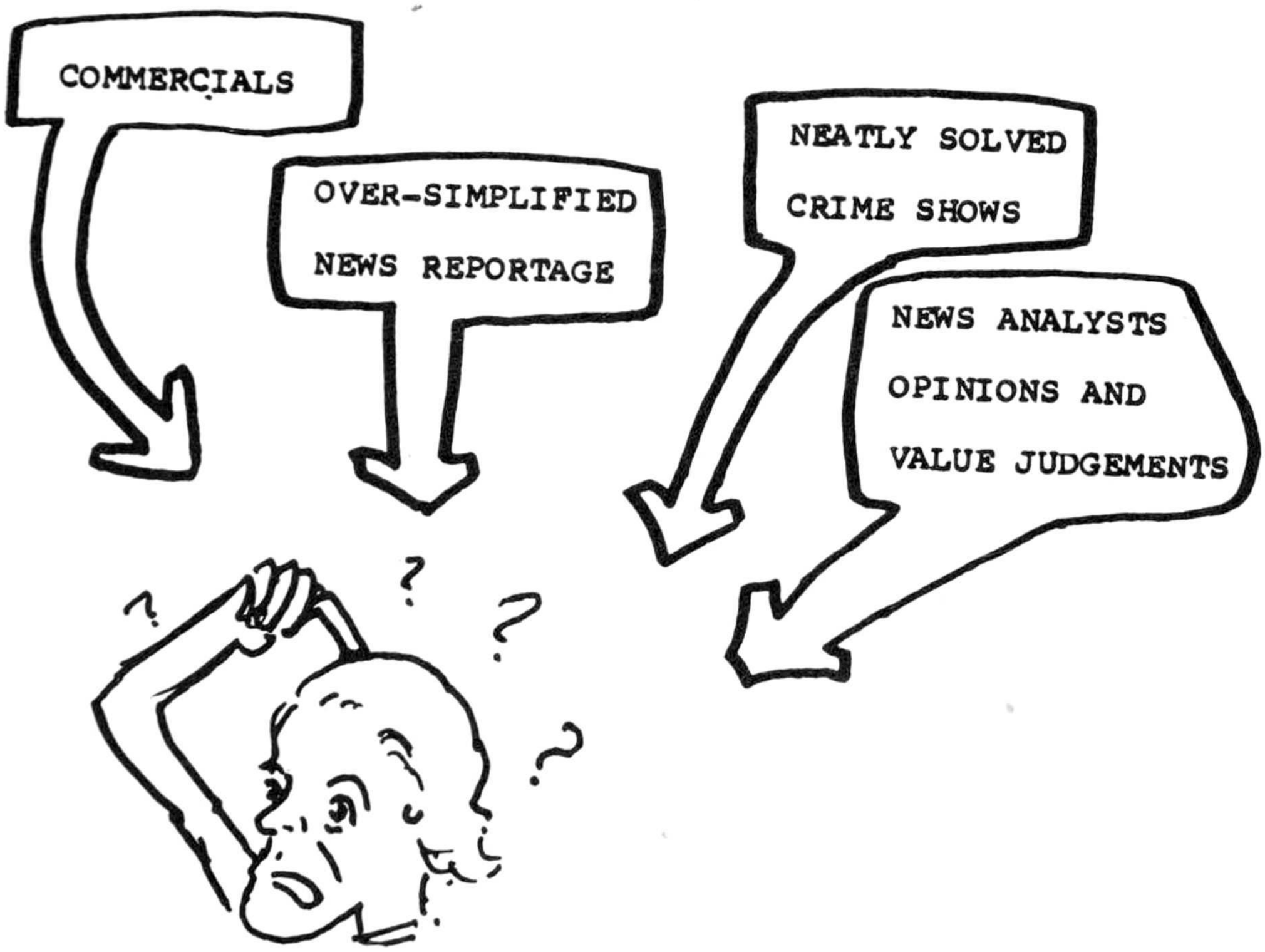
TELEVISION in converting facts (data) to information, as an abstracting service, must be selective as it carries out its "secret teacher" role. . .


E T H I T W* on June 17, 1975
commercial
Large City Unemployment
commercial
David Brinkley on "rascals" in the White House
C.I.A. Probe Concluded Did we approve "killings
Violence in Large City High Schools
commercial
The Second Anniversary of "Watergate": What did it achieve?
commercial
a half hour network news program is equal to one page of a newspaper. TV, covering a much larger audience than newspapers, covers much less - due to its limited format.

1. How is TV news restricted? What is left out?
2. Why might the "media" be called a "secret teacher"?

* *E*verything *T*hat *H*appens *I*n *T*he *W*orld

Physical Limitations of Humans in Processing Distorted Information And overload of Trivia And/or Questionable INFORMATION



1. How does the "average" person react to "media" messages?

2. How much "news" does the high school student read, watch or listen to?

3. Does more instantaneous news information make people more involved in politics or in choosing elected representatives?

4. What might be some ways to encourage more citizen participation in media production? Information sharing?

20

PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH

Begin with the entire class or small groups, bringing up any difficulties they as students have met in using their native tongue (English or dialects of English) in communicating formally or informally, either orally or in writing, with others.

Write them down, then list the problems on the board (avoiding repetition). Some will generate others and should lead to a broad and lively discussion of the nature of the difficulty of conveying ideas to others through language. Now read the following discussion of linguistics (the science of language) which is the product of a dozen years of research in language and language-related areas.

1. By its very nature as a kind of language, English is about 35% redundant. That means that we use or *need* far more words to express meaning than most other languages. Newspaper editors often cross out about one of every five words that beginning reporters use in their news copy. That is also why we abbreviate much of any written message we leave for others to read, with little loss of semantic content.

2. The word stock (vocabulary) of English is much larger than other languages (except Chinese Mandarin), consisting of almost a million words. Not only does this indicate how widespread and complex our English-speaking societies are in today's world, but it also creates many problems related to inter-human and inter-society com-

munications. It's rather like needing ten huskies to haul a sled rather than a gas-operated snowmobile to get us from one place to another.

3. The spelling system of English is woefully "out-of-fit" with the speech sounds made by English-speakers. Attempts to use a new phonetic alphabet have, in most cases, *failed*! As a result, much confusion ensues and valuable class time continues to be used in spelling drills, writing exercises, vocabulary study, etc., that could probably be better used in helping students understand more useful awarenesses of language and communication.

Consider the following example of the difference between spelling and sound. Would you believe the letters "G H O T I" could spell "fish"? Pronounce the word "enough." The "gh" is sounded like a conventional "f." How about the "o" in "women"? It's pronounced like an "i." Now, say the word "notion." The "ti" is sounded like "sh," isn't it? Put them all together and they spell "F I S H." If all the separate speech sounds in English were represented by different letters, there would be about 44 rather than 26 we have inherited from the Latin alphabet.

When the earliest alphabet form was adopted by the Greeks, who took it from the Phonecians, who borrowed from the Syrians, who got it from several Semitic tribes several thousand years ago, but mainly the Egyptians, there were no letters to represent vowel sounds. Vowels refer to the sounds that come between consonants in words, traditionally referring to the letter sounds a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y. The Greeks put them into the language that we have inherited. In so doing, they have given us the major source of our spelling and pronouncing troubles—about 80% of them. Actually, there should be about nine vowel letters for English, while several of the consonants could be eliminated because they are duplicated by other letters. That is only a part of the trouble with English. Let us continue on to several others.

4. Until recently, English grammar, reading, and writing instruction have been treated as if English were a language different from what *it actually is*—more like Latin, or German or another of those languages that have what is called "grammatical inflection." Contrary to what most people think, English does not have verb tense, pronoun case, voice, mood, or gender as most Indo-European languages do. English has evolved through the centuries into a language that conveys meaning mainly by the way its many words are *put together* in a sentence or statement, that is, its *word order*. Switch

the words around slightly and you have nonsense. There is no secret code or grammar device that can be used to help English users communicate more effectively. Another startling fact is that one's reading speed remains about the same throughout life. Most experiments have also pointed out that writing skills cannot be taught or transferred from one person to another. That seems to take care of about two-thirds of our language arts programs as mostly a waste of time, doesn't it? Let us consider another, even more serious obstruction to communicating or evaluating things with English.

5. The English language, like most other Indo-European languages, is structured in such a way that it hinders a proper description of reality—how things are "outside our skins." English name words (which we abstracted earlier) try to label things, while other kinds of words are used to tie these name words together. All of this is presented in a left-to-right, one-thing-after-another sort of way. The result is that we tend to regard the bits and pieces of our environment in an unchanging, separate, time-and-space, static, parts-of-a-whole way. Very little of what our language expresses seems to fit together as a functioning unit. Our language hinders our ability to see or describe an "organism-as-a-whole in its environment" as it really is according to modern scientific findings.

Phenomena (what we see and mentalize and try to express) in English can never be an "on-going," dynamic, pulsating, involving, "*process*" activity. It tends to be more a chaotic mass of unrelated objects and events, causes, results, terms, opinions, urges, prescriptions, etc., somehow herded together by a rather directionless and inadequate vehicle—verbal language! A striking example of the disjointed way in which things are arranged can be seen in the way our courses are set up in sequence—Woodworking I, then Woodworking II—the glaring lack of relationship between the various courses even within one department of the school. Notice, too, how our society has set up specialization of work or research activities as a goal for most professions and occupations to pursue. Wide-ranging knowledge has been discouraged in our society to the immense detriment of human progress in our time. Perhaps it is a natural outgrowth of the obstructing elements in our language.

These concerns may lead the student to a number of interesting discoveries if they were only looked into. They may or may not fall within the realm of general semantics as it is studied today. At any rate, they are probably worthwhile things to know about.

What can we do to help overcome these handicaps to understanding, communicating with one another more effectively, and living happier lives? Study the various characteristics of language and the principles of sound communication that G.S. stresses: *listen, evaluate, try harder to understand others,* be more *specific*, etc. Ask for meanings from others; base your statements on *facts* rather than *inference.* Rely less on words and more on showing things, body gestures, and other kinds of nonverbal signals. Above all, practice the skill of asking questions continually, and increasing your awareness of all that goes on around you.

21

ABSTRACTIONS AND ADULT INFANTILISM

How old are you?

Alfred Korzybski, basing one of his concluding chapters in *Science and Sanity** on a study made by Drs. Jelliffe and Joseph Collins, discusses adult infantilism in the following passages which are paraphrased, quoted, and in some cases, with interpretations added:

"When we speak of infantilism in adults, we include symptoms which belong to the period of childhood in its *self-centered, self-gratifying* stages. These semantic stages are natural to children; they become unnatural and pathological (serious mental) problems only when the person *does not* outgrow them or exhibits them as a grown-up."

Children have few responsibilities and sex drives are underdeveloped. Their behavior, therefore, is not dangerous to themselves and others. Not so with "grown-ups." Adults have responsibilities, strong sex drives and heavy societal duties, etc., that greatly affect themselves and others. Therefore, infantile traits, if not outgrown, become dangerous characteristics, harming those who retain them as well as others they live with. One must remember that the term "infantilism" is a sinister one and should never be applied to children. In adults it becomes a vicious weapon.

Youngsters often confuse or are unaware of "abstraction levels." They behave as primitive man once did. That is, trees come alive, the sun not only looks down on them but reaches out and beckons them to it. They too quickly see similarities in objects and people. To use a familiar syllogism: Daddy runs fast; horses run fast; therefore, daddy is a horse.

As children mature and sort out "fact" from "fancy" they discard these illogical perceptions and the s.r. that accompany them. Through experience and more advanced and careful habits of perception, they begin to evaluate data that resembles reality more closely. "False-to-facts" orientation is questioned, and the person begins to "self-correct" his behavior and endeavors to make it conform to real living situations.

When adults fail to achieve this level of self-correction and continue to retain "infantile traits," all sorts of problems occur. Severe mental problems, paranoia (persecution complex), schizophrenia (sometimes associated with "split personality") and other clinically diagnosed symptoms are exhibited. Prostitution (excessive sense gratification), criminality (harming others), homosexuality and many lesser disorders appear.

In all cases, they are the result of the failure to recognize or become conscious of the abstracting process, which is a "normal" developmental part of "growing up."

Some symptoms of "infantilism" appear in almost everyone's daily lives: physically assaulting an inanimate object because it does not work; blaming others for one's own failures or shortcomings; pouting when we don't get our own way; wanting both of two or all of several choices when only one is obtainable or "realistic."

When such "infantile" traits appear in a nation or country, they are exhibited in the following ways: making a *national* craze or concern of a sport or game or its outcome; excessive bragging about a nation's achievements or power or superiority in some way or another; *delusional* or *false* advertising practices; political deceptions or the

falsifying of facts to the public; the tendency to say one thing to one person or audience and a different one to another; hiding the truth as they know it for their advantage or power.

Individually, infantilism is displayed by immoderation or intemporate eating and drinking habits; being quick to show likes or dislikes; becoming solemn in one's games while ignoring "real" problems. Being more interested in "getting" than "giving"; a fascination with "violence" or a use of it as a means of achieving goals more quickly.

As a means of determining your own degree of infantilism or how many of its traits you have failed to "outgrow" as a result of the lack of consciousness of abstracting, complete the following inventory and evaluate the results:

A Self Infantory

In the following list of traits, circle the appropriate letters that apply to you as accurately as you can. The three degrees used are: 1) *Almost Always;* 2) *Occasionally*; and 3) *Very Seldom.*

1. I fail to understand anything complicated:	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
2. I am able to perceive parts or elements of things *but not* the "whole."	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
3. When confronted with a choice between two things, I want both even though only *one* is obtainable or "realistic."	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
4. I appreciate or recognize similarities (resemblances) between things rather then differences:	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
5. My attention is quickly gained and as quickly diverted (distracted or lost):	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
6. I love praise and hate blame as well as react negatively to criticism.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
7. I tend to blame others or "outside" circumstances for my own failures.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐

8. I tend to evaluate things in extremes: either good—"wonderful" or bad—"terrible."	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
9. I enjoy watching one athletic team or person defeat another as well as I like watching excessively violent movies.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
10. I kick machines or other objects when frustrated in some way or another.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
11. I over-eat or over-drink or over-play.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
12. I prefer to have others make decisions for me even when they affect me directly.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
13. I am easily frightened and influenced by others.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
14. I enjoy fantasies, fairy tales, accounts of supernatural happenings, spiritualism, etc.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
15. As a girl, I am attracted to boys who have "infantile traits," who seem to be helpless, aloof, are changeable and "self-centered." As a boy, I like girls who cannot handle responsibilities, seem "kittenish," self-satisfied, have a weak personality but are physically attractive but emotionally immature.	A.A.☐	O.☐	V.S.☐
Total	———	——	———

If, when you total the "almost always," "occasionally," and "very seldom" columns, you find there are more A.A.'s than the others, you have failed to outgrow most of the "infantile" traits normal to childhood (pre-adolescence) and are not sufficiently conscious of abstracting as most of your classmates are. If you check more of the O's than the others, you are perhaps maturing satisfactorily. If you check more V.S.'s, you have reached a higher degree of maturity and are more conscious of abstracting than the majority of your classmates of nearly the same chronological age.

Follow-up Projects

1. Do a visual or cartoon depicting an infantile trait, or assemble a group of advertisements that appeal to infantile characteristics in people.

2. Do a visual or video-tape showing fascination with or participation in violence or brutal contact sport or trivial pastimes, such as game shows or excessive materialism or waste of natural resources, etc.

3. Do a visual or video-tape or cassette tape which displays prostitution, alcoholism, criminality, or some other sense-gratification or infantile trait in human behavior.

4. Evaluate or do a short research paper on the tendency of some school officials to prolong infantilism in students or others by excessive regulations, conformity to clocks, bells, walking in the same direction, dress codes, pep rallies, grade achievements, announcements, strict attendance, punishments and mistrust of students' motives, etc.

5. Point out how infantilism as a "national" trait is exhibited in contradictory laws, inconsistent criminal penalties, the need for large numbers of lawyers to keep track of the "laws," our inordinate (unusually excessive) love of "pets," unusually high patriotic fervor, the tendency to look alike or dress alike or act alike, etc.

6. Prepare a list of "infantile" traits as you now understand them as they are displayed by others (adults) in various situations.

22

SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP PROJECTS

By now, a lively G.S. class should be a beehive of feedback activity, group-think involvements, socio-drama and role skit presentations; film showings and color slide reviewing, tape playbacks of interviews, and oral reports, not to mention a room full of visual displays of communications situations and cartoons. At least this has been the case with this teacher over the past several years. Listed below are some very interesting types of group or individual projects that might be used:

1. With a tape recorder, go down into the lower grades (if such exist near your school) and ask different kids what they would do if they found out that the world would be destroyed in about 48 hours. This can really be a fascinating revelation of attitudes about life and the universe by people of different age levels.

2. Ask a number of students what they associate with such lively topics as "sex," "dope," "school in general," "booze," "football," "the president," or any other highly charged term.

3. Interview your school guidance counselor or dean of boys or girls and ask them what they think they are accomplishing, or whether they think they are communicating well enough with the students they are responsible for.

4. Ideally, any situation where communication is supposed to be

going on should be "fair game" for a general semantics probe. If possible, have several students attend a board of education meeting when it meets with an employee negotiation group, or a city council or county board meeting. If tape recorders are allowed, use them. Otherwise, take notes and prepare a feedback report to the class on how much information-sharing did or did not occur, how communication blocks came about or were overcome, etc., using the principles advanced in this short course as a guide.

5. A local court house is "Bonanza Land" for a general semantics field trip. Take the whole class into the building and, if there are several types of court cases going on, have the class separate and observe each in shifts. Ask the clerk of the court or the county or circuit judge to explain the procedures in such things as jury selection, the examination of witnesses, etc. Felonies, misdemeanors, traffic violations, etc., are interesting to watch as they are handled by judges, district attorneys, or other legal personel. It is wise to anticipate the experience by having the "law" teacher or a lawyer talk to the class before or after the field trip. Have a group conduct a "mock" trial, pointing out some of the fallacies, oversimplifications, etc., that are a part of our legal system.

6. Surveys and questionnaire projects are also most interesting general semantics projects. They may be used to have faculty, student, administration, or parents express attitudes about any current topic of interest, such as "permissiveness," "return to basic skill," "drug abuse," "abortion," "sex in the media," "skin flicks," and the movie-rating system, etc. Be sure that G.S. attitudes and principles enter into these activities.

7. As the class progresses, any number of ideas may present themselves as the students observe what others are doing. Student-originated projects are the most successful because they stem from what the students think is important. Some are less successful than others, but that doesn't matter. In an open type of class, where students and instructor mingle and get to know each other and interrelate, where competing for recognition and grades is of *no importance*, failure complexes and shyness seem to disappear, at least after the first several weeks of the course.

8. One should not overlook the usefulness of class demonstrations

that point out the "unreliability" of the senses. Dr. H. A. Hilgartner presented a valuable mathematical treatise that boiled down to an important hypothesis: a) we don't see things clearly, but b) the human organism has the ability to "self-correct" (see things more clearly), *if and only if* it is aware of *a.* and *b.*

Have a group prepare a role skit showing how a rumor can be transmitted from one person to another which results in a complete distortion of what actually happened to someone. Some students may have some skills or awareness of optical illusions or magic tricks. Have them display them or prepare a visual demonstration that emphasizes how easily the senses are tricked.

9. A most significant film, *The Marvel of the Senses,* prepared by the Moody Institute of Science (2 reels) is one of the few useful films available for G.S. use. Another one is a short film called *A Communication Primer* available through many film distributors, that explores many facets of the communication process. Evaluating local T.V. programs and news media also may be used for class feed-back projects.

Appendix A

THE WHAT-IS-IT? ANIMAL

An *OPOSSUM* (Didelphis virginiana). Any of a family of American marsupials, chiefly nocturnal, largely arboreal and almost omnivorous. When caught, it feigns death, and is fond of hanging by its tail.

Appendix B

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

A very unusual and thorough character analysis was conducted several years ago involving a class of high schoolers that took into account fifteen character traits made by everyone in class on everyone else. With the help of university professors of psychology, 120 hours of computerized statistics were used. The following results may be generalized:

1. Our description of others describes *us* far more accurately than the target of our evaluation! We use our own attitudes and biases in judging others far more than objective criteria (others' evaluations).

2. We are initially attracted to others by pleasing (to us) physical features and attitudinal similarities in judging classmates. After that, we attach all sorts of positive and likeable qualities to them which are *not* shared by others who may know them just as well.

3. The lower the grades, the less likeable a schoolmate is, until the grade-point average reaches a high level—"A". Then dislike resumes on as intense a level.

4. The most likeable student was a composite: B average, male, athlete, who made frequent "anti-intellectual" comments and questioned the instructor's remarks and opinions, highly "extroverted" but liked even by the teacher.

The most disliked was an attractive but highly (to the others) opinionated expresser of "women's liberation" and other "anti-establishment" views. She was especially rated "low" by the girls in class who were involved in cheerleading and other "pep" and club involvement activities.

The above findings were based on a class of 22 high school juniors and seniors, well distributed in grade point averages and sex.

The instructor feels compelled to note that he was rated the "highest" in SEX APPEAL of all involved, despite his rather advanced age (50) and several distinct indications of forgetfulness and "dottage" of one sort or another. Maybe that's why we continue to have teachers remain in the profession. (Author's note—and a happy one at that.)

Appendix C

INFERENCE AND FACT PICTURE EXERCISE

The actual facts involved in the picture are:

1. No. This is an aeronautics (vocational) class.

2. No. The instructor is 26 years old.

3. No. This is Einstein's famous general theory of relativity equation used to determine the "scientific" background of the class.

4. No. These are high school (11th and 12th grade) students.

5. No. There is no valid basis for the assumption that girls are more "attentive" in the average classroom.

6. No. Far more time is spent in actual involvement with equipment and audio-visual type materials than lectures and printed devices.

If you had more "no" than "yes" responses, you are probably less likely to make invalid inferences from what you observe. Modern scientific and philosophical methods urge us to "doubt" and then qualify or quantify the "data" we observe before we make judgments which are then held to be only "theories" until proven.

Other Considerations

1. It is just as "unfair" to be asked "unanswerable" questions as it

is "unwise" to make snap judgments or inferences about what we see.

2. It may be helpful to encourage students to *ask* more and more questions about date than to be required to *answer* questions that may arise in class. When more and more questions are asked, it opens up avenues of *inquiry* that lead to enlarged awareness and true learning!

3. The whole process of "testing" in our schools with "true-false," or multiple-choice, or any other technique may be questioned and evaluated at this time, and teachers interviewed to determine how they justify using the testing methods in their courses.

INFORMATION-SHARING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT A COURSE COVERS.

Tests should determine what you *do know*, rather than what you *don't.*

Appendix D

THE WAGERING GAME

A number of awarenesses may emerge from involvement in this fascinating game.

If teams follow instructions successfully (no easy matter), here is what usually happens:

One or the other team will, after playing several games, come to realize that if they choose one color and stick to it, they will then win a moderate but steady amount of money and make sizeable winnings in the special trials 3 and 7.

The losing team may want to give up, feeling there is no way of breaking the pattern set by their opponents. The winners' interest may lessen also, assuming the money they win is imaginary, after all. Even winning steadily can become a "bore."

There is a *key* that will enable both teams to win a maximum of money, depending only on how rapidly they play (check to see if anyone succeeded in doing this). Here it is:

> If both teams chose "blue-blue" for all trials *except* 3 and 7, they will each win $.50 a game. If they reverse their color choice on the special trials or innings, first "blue-green" and then "green-blue," each team will win an additional $.75 a game, amounting to $1.25 a game for *each team*!

The foregoing can come about either by luck (very unlikely), or by one or both teams' realizing how both can gain a mutual maximum profit *if* they can make the other team aware of it by some means other than talking. The problem is "lack of communication"

(which plagues human societies continually). The reason behind the players' failure to guess at or "stumble on" the "key" is because most people are so intent on "doing the other fellow in," defeating someone else. It is as if we can never gain anything unless it is at someone's else's expense! *My gain* must be *your loss*!

In the realm of physical sciences, it is generally agreed upon that there *are* "limited resources." Especially in recent years, we have come to recognize the diminishing supply of such things as energy sources, raw materials, etc. However, such is not the case regarding *human resources.* Such things as "kindness," "trust," "cooperation," and "love" abound in *unlimited amounts.* Too bad we are, in this materialistic world, indoctrinated with the destructive attitudes of "defeating," "subduing," "challenging," "grabbing," "WINNING" at another's expense, as this game, and virtually every other game we are taught, is structured on this most *destructive* premise!

Appendix E

ORAL TEST ON GENERAL SEMANTICS

1. What might semanticists mean by the "meaning of meaning"?

2. Why are dictionaries unreliable as a source of the "real" meaning of words?

3. Is thought possible without "language"?

4. Are words capable of describing ourselves and others very clearly?

5. Is it true that a picture is worth a thousand words? Explain.

6. How do abstract and concrete (or specific) words differ? How can one make the distinction clear?

7. Explain what is meant by the "two-value" system of making judgements?

8. Name several master symbols that have been used in the past to make people obey rules, worship, or follow orders irrationally?

9. What may someone mean by the term "cultural lag"?

10. Do you think our educational system is as "up to date" in its teaching methods and course content as it should be?

11. Why are obsolete curricula retained (continued) beyond their usefulness and practicality?

12. Explain the difference between an "intentional" and an "extensional" statement.

13. What do you think propaganda is? Give several examples.

14. Name several dishonest and deceptive devices used by advertisers to sell their products.

15. How can a maximum of information-sharing be achieved in our society, either between groups of among individuals?

16. Why might it be possible to read or think too much?

17. What do you think of the method of covering this course? What are its advantages or disadvantages?

18. Do you think argumentation or debate serves any worthwhile purpose in furthering human relationships or aiding communications? How?

19. Why is it so hard to compose questions such as these?

20. Are you glad you took this course? Why or why not?

Appendix F

STATEMENTS ABOUT LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. "Whatever we say something is, *it is not*!" (Korzybski)

2. "Definitions which apply to everyone, apply to no one." (Korzybski)

3. "False knowledge breeds insanity." (Korzybski)

4. "Don't talk about it; *do it*!" "Don't describe it, *show it*!" (Korzybski)

5. "In most cases, the more talk, the more agreement." (Rachel Lauer)

6. "To simplify is to falsify." (Korzybski)

7. "A. There is an inherent uncertainty in perception (we don't see things clearly), however, B. Organisms have the ability to self-correct (see things more clearly), *if and only if* the organism has an awareness of A and B (he doesn't see things clearly and has the ability to self-correct his perceptions)." (H. Andrew Hilgartner)

8. "I think, therefore I am." (Rene Descartes)

9. "There is an exception to every rule." Is that a rule? (Alton Barbour)

10. "It would be most helpful if everyone was provided with a 'built-in,' fool-proof crap detector." (Ernest Hemingway)

11. "The only thing that changes from day to day in newspapers is *names* and *dates*." (Henry D. Thoreau)

12. "We have in the United States a government of the people, by the rich, for the corporations." (Nicholas Johnson)

13. "History is a rumor agreed upon." (anon.)

14. "Plagiarism is copying from one author; a 'term paper' from many." (anon.)

15. "Women, generally speaking, are generally speaking." (anon.)

16. "The only one you can ever convince with logic is yourself." (anon.)

17. "Most men will become involved in a fight for no other reason than that they are walking in opposite directions on a road." (Santayana)

18. "What they don't know won't hurt them." " 'The people' will forget all about it in no time at all." "How will it play in Peoria?" (Richard Nixon *et al*).

19. "Most of the very important questions about life are never *asked* or *answered* in the classroom." (P. M. O'Brien)

20. "*Nothing* is as important as *you think it is*!" (P. M. O'Brien)

21. "Talk less, listen more, and ask questions endlessly." (P. M. O'Brien)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed below are books and pamphlets, both hard- and soft-cover, used in the preparation of this text that are available either through the International Society of General Semantics (P.O. Box 2469, 509 Sansome St., San Francisco, California 94126) or The Institute of General Semantics (Lakeville, Connecticut 06039). The abbreviations for the former are indicated by "I.S.G.S." and for the Lakeville, Connecticut, organization by "I.G.S." Membership in either organization will result in up to a 20% reduction in book costs and is well worth the nominal membership fee, since annual or quarterly publications from each are included, as well as the opportunity to attend workshops, institutes, or seminars offered by either organization for interested members.

Korzybski, Alfred.

Manhood of Humanity. 1921; 2nd ed., 1950 (326 pp.). Available either through I.S.G.S. or I.G.S., $6. Members of I.S.G.S., $4.50.

Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics. 1933; 4th ed., 1958 (806 pp.). I.G.S. members, $14.50; I.S.G.S. members, $12; nonmembers, $15.

Selections from Science and Sanity. 1948. 7th printing with additional material, 1972 (286 pp., softcover). I.G.S. members, $5.40; I.S.G.S. members, $4.80; nonmembers, $6.00.

Hayakawa, S. I.

Language in Thought and Action (Revised Edition, hardcover). I.S.G.S. members, $5.40; nonmembers, $6.75 (hardcover).

Symbol, Status and Personality (hardcover). I.S.G.S. members, $4.60; nonmembers, $5.75.

Bois, J. Samuel.

Explorations in Awareness. New York: Harper & Row, 1957 (126 pp., hardcover), $4.95. I.G.S. members, $3.50; I.S.G.S. members, $3.95.

The Art of Awareness. Wm. C. Brown, 1966 (299 pp., hardcover), $6.75. Available from either I.G.S. or I.S.G.S., $6.75.

Communication as Creative Experience (42-page booklet). Members of I.S.G.S., $1.50; nonmembers, $1.90.

Johnson, Wendell.

People in Quandries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment. New York: Harper & Row, 1946 (516 pp., hardcover), $9.75. I.S.G.S. members, $9.75.

Your Most Enchanted Listener. New York: Harper & Row, 1956 (215 pp., hardcover), $5.95. I.S.G.S. members, $2.80 (paper-back); I.G.S. members, $4.50 (hardcover).

By Miscellaneous Authors:

Know What I Mean? Ed. by Victor Kryston and Portia Meares. A new book of thought-provoking articles, news items, car-toons, and exercises. I.S.G.S. members, $1.65; others, $1.95.

About Semantics. A sixteen-page, cleverly illustrated, and simplified booklet on semantics. $1.00 per copy, or less for larger

quantity orders—offered by I.S.G.S. (also may be accompanied by a packet of transparencies upon request).

How to Talk with People. Irving Lee. New York: Harper & Row, 1952 (176 pp., hardcover), $6.75. I.S.G.S. members, $4.95.

Danger—Men Talking. Stuart Chase. A book especially appealing to young people. I.S.G.S. members, $3.60; nonmembers, $4.50 (hardcover).

Communications, the Transfer of Meaning. Don Fabun. A most thought-provoking and color-illustrated booklet. *Kaiser Aluminum News*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1965); revised ed., Glencoe Press, 1968 (48 pp.), $2.00. I.S.G.S. members, $1.00.

The Dynamics of Change. Don Fabun. Probes the future in another creatively illustrated book. I.S.G.S. members, $7.15; nonmembers, $8.95.

How to Talk Back to Your Television Set. Nicholas Johnson. Covers the many facets of televiewing, programming, etc., by a most voluble member of the Federal Communications Commission. I.S.G.S. members, $4.60; nonmembers $5.75 (hardcover).

Fights, Games and Debates. Anatol Rapoport. An interesting approach to problems of describing gaming, conflict, etc. I.S.G.S. members, $6.35; nonmembers, $7.95.

ETC.: a Review of General Semantics. Five assorted back issues of *ETC.*, the world's most widely read journal in the fields of general semantics and communication. I.S.G.S. members, $4.80; nonmembers, $6.00.

Understanding in a World of Words. Catherine Minteer. Follows her successful text for junior and senior high school use, *Words and What They Do to You* (1965), and has had a wide adoption (1970, 209 pp., clothbound). I.S.G.S. members, $4.00; nonmembers, $5.00.

ALVERNO COLLEGE LIBRARY
ng with langu
13
0219057 3

REMOVED FROM THE
ALVERNO COLLEGE LIBRARY

135348

422
013

Alverno College
Library Media Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

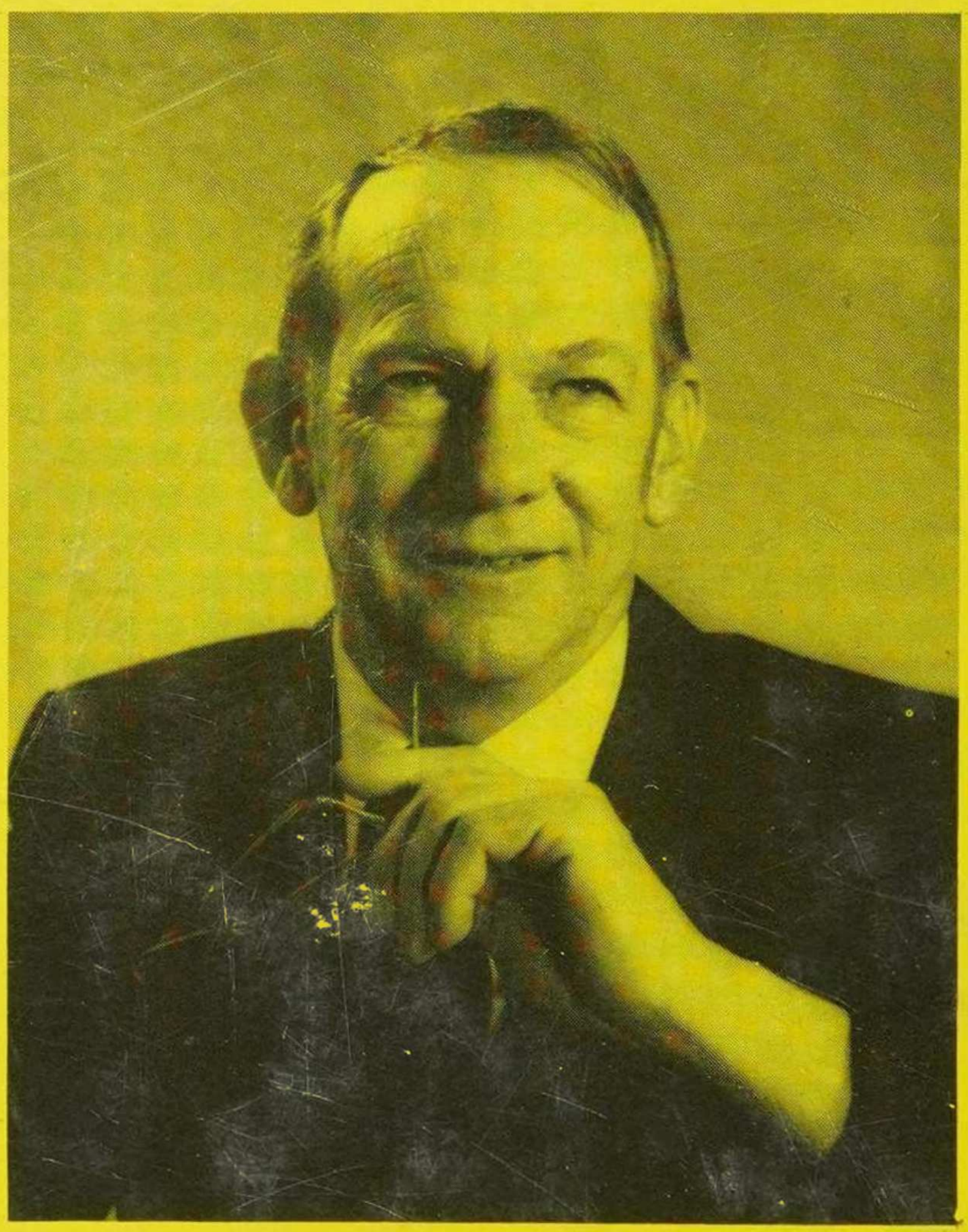
OEMCO

(Continued from front flap)

format or requiring the student to become involved in school, family, or local civic activities to see who (if anyone) is really saying what (if anything), and how.

A short "Instructor's Guide" is included, as well as many suggestions for the teacher in the text, and a Bibliography of recommended additional reading.

Living With Language, either as a class text or as resource material for the teacher, can be a highly effective means of developing in high school students an awareness of the words and word-processes they (and others around them) use, and, as such, assist them to communicate better with all those with whom they come in contact. It is an exciting and potentially highly rewarding book.



About the Author

P. M. O'Brien was born and grew up in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Following service in the Air Force as a crew member on a bomber in World War II, he earned a B.S. in education at Wisconsin State University, Eau Claire, and then entered teaching, taking time off to earn an M.S. in history at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He has been a high school teacher, specializing in language and communication, ever since.

Becoming interested in the field of linguistics in the late 1950s, Mr. O'Brien developed high school teaching units in structural linguistics, wrote articles for professional journals, and consulted with professional organizations in communications. He has been a featured speaker at several Midwestern and national English conventions and conferences.

Mr. O'Brien and his wife, Patricia, make their home on the Eau Claire River outside Eau Claire.

VANTAGE PRESS, Inc., 516 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001